

The 108 divine Names of Lord Ram

Important Note: These 108 holy and divine Names of Lord Ram have been compiled, edited and English version along with explanation of the original text in Sanskrit has been prepared by Ajai Kumar Chhawchharia.

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The 108 divine Names of Lord Ram

Lord Ram's holy 108 Names have appeared in the Padma Puran and the Anand Ramayan. These are two ancient scriptures where these names are enumerated—one is the Padma Puran, Uttar Khand, Canto 281, verse nos. 30-48, and the other is the Anand Ramayan, Purva Kand, Canto 6, verse nos. 32-51. We shall read both of them for their magnificence, beauty, spiritual rewards and our knowledge of the divinity of Lord Ram who was none else but the Supreme Being himself manifested in his human form.

First we shall read the hymns of the Padma Puran, and then those of the Anand Ramayan.

At the end of this section we shall see the significance of the figure '108'.

Section 1:

108 Divine Names of Lord Ram according to the Padma Puran

Lord Ram's great 108 Names are enumerated in the Padma Puran, Uttar Khand, Canto 281, verse nos. 30-48. They were pronounced by Lord Shiva for the benefit of his divine consort goddess Parvati.

It so happened that once Lord Shiva invited goddess Parvati (pronounced as *Paarvati*) to share their meal together on the summit of Mt. Kailash, which is the abode of Lord Shiva on earth. Parvati replied that she would eat only after she had paid her obeisance to Lord Vishnu, the Supreme Being, by using the Lord's one thousand divine Names. At this, Lord Shiva told her—'You are really blessed that you have so much devotion for Lord Vishnu. But I depend on Lord Ram's holy and divine Name 'Ram' for all my spiritual purposes, and for me this single name 'Ram' is equivalent to thousands of Lord Vishnu. So oh goddess, you can take this single name 'Ram' and feel rest assured that you would have taken the thousand holy and divine names of Lord Vishnu. Thus, say 'Ram' and come to share the meal with me.'

Parvati obeyed her husband's orders because she knew very well that there was no one more enlightened and wise than Lord Shiva in this creation, so he must be correct. After meals, she said to Shiva—'Oh Lord. You have said that the single name of Lord Ram, i.e. 'Ram', is equivalent to thousands of names of Lord Vishnu. This has aroused great faith in the holy name 'Ram' in me, and I wonder that if a single name is so powerful and profound, what would be the potential of other names of Lord Ram if one were to take all of them. It boggles my mind, and I am very eager to know the other holy names of the Lord. So Lord, if there are other such great names of the Lord, please tell me about them.'

Shiva replied—'Alright. I shall tell you the other names of Lord Ram. Indeed, all the countless divine names of the Supreme Being as narrated in the Vedas as well as traditionally known by this world are different variations of the holy name of Lord Ram.

Lord Ram also has one thousand names, but out of them there are one hundred eight names which have greater importance and are considered prominent. Even as each single name of Lord Vishnu has more divinity, blessedness and holiness than all the hymns of the Vedas put together, the single name 'Ram' of Lord Ram is regarded as being equivalent to thousands of holy names and hymns.

Oh Parvati! More powerful spiritual benefits are obtainable by doing Japa (repetition) of one single name 'Ram' than chanting all the hymns of the Vedas or repeating so many other names of different forms of the Supreme Being.

That said and done, now let me tell you (Parvati) the one hundred eight divine and holy names of Lord Ram which have been sung by great sages and seers.

ॐ श्रीरामो रामचन्द्रश्च रामभद्रश्च शाश्वतः । राजीवलोचनः श्रीमान् राजेन्द्रो रघुपुङ्गवः ॥ १ ॥

Line no. 1 = ॐ श्रीरामो (1) 'OM Sri Ramo'—Salutations to Lord Ram who is the Supreme Being represented by the divine cosmic word OM. Lord Ram is the Lord God who is invoked by great sages and ascetics when they do meditation using this Mantra 'OM'.

रामचन्द्रश्च (2) 'Ramchandrascha'—Lord Ram is as beautiful, comforting, enchanting and soothing as the full Moon (Chandra). [Again, since the Moon is regarded as a heavenly pitcher of Amrit, the ambrosia of eternity and bliss, Lord Ram also provides the same benefits to his devotees and followers.]

रामभद्रश्च (3) 'Ram Bhadrasha'—The gentleman Lord Ram is extremely polite, courteous, affable and amiable.

शाश्वतः । (4) 'Shaashwat'—The Lord (Sri Ram) is eternal, truthful and universal.

राजीवलोचनः (5) 'Rajiv Lochan'—The Lord (Sri Ram) has eyes which are like the lotus flower. [Lord Ram's eyes are as beautiful as the lotus flower.]

श्रीमान् राजेन्द्रो (6) 'Srimaan Raajendro'—The Lord (Sri Ram) is endowed with all the grandeur, majesty, magnificence, authority, power and dignity that befits an Emperor. The Lord is an Emperor amongst Kings.

रघुपुङ्गवः ॥ (7) 'Raghu-pungav'—The Lord (Sri Ram) is the best in the race of kings of the Raghu dynasty (who ruled over the ancient kingdom of Ayodhya).

जानकीवल्लभो जैत्रो जितामित्रो जनार्दनः । विश्वामित्रप्रियो दान्तः शरण्यत्राणतत्परः ॥ २ ॥

Line no. 2 = जानकीवल्लभो (8) 'Jaanki-Vallabho'—The Lord (Sri Ram) is most dear to Sita, known as 'Janki', the daughter of king Janak. [Sita, also known as Janki, was the divine consort of Lord Ram. She is known as 'Jaanki' or 'Janki' because she was the daughter of king Janak. 'Janki' = the daughter of Janak; Sita; 'Vallabho' = one who is very dear; a husband.]

जैत्रो (9) 'Jaitro'—The Lord (Sri Ram) is always victorious and invincible.

जितामित्रो (10) 'Jitaa-mitro'—The Lord (Sri Ram) is a friendly conqueror. [The word implies that the Lord is not a ruthless, tyrannical and merciless conqueror who likes to spill blood of enemies. He is 'friendly' in the sense that if the opponent of the Lord pleads for mercy, the Lord goes all out to forgive him and accept him as one of his own subjects. 'Jita' = to win; 'Mitra' = a friend. 'A-mitra' = one who is not friendly.]

जनार्दनः । (11) 'Janaardan'—The Lord (Sri Ram) is merciful, benevolent, kind and gracious to all his subjects (i.e. the creatures of the world). He pays attention to their prayers and listens to them all compassionately. ['Jan' = the subjects of a king's realm; dependants; 'Aardan' = one who gives succour and relief from, or eliminates agonies, miseries and problems.]

विश्वामित्रप्रियो (12) 'Vishwamitra-priyo'—The Lord (Sri Ram) is dear to sage Vishwamitra; or the Lord who is a friend ('Mitra') of the whole world ('Vishwa'). [Sage Vishwamitra was the one whose fire sacrifice was protected by the Lord from being defiled by the demons. The Lord was very dear to the sage, and it was this sage who was instrumental in the Lord's marriage with Sita at Janakpur.]

दान्तः (13) 'Daanta'—The Lord (Sri Ram) has exemplary self-control or self-restraint over his sense organs. [There are said to be ten sense organs—five of perception and five of action. The five sense organs of perception are eyes which see, nose which smells, ears which hear, tongue which tastes, and skin which feels. The five sense organs of action are the hands which receive things and do deeds, the legs which take one to his destination, the mouth which helps one to speak and eat and drink, the excretory which help to eliminate waste from the body, and the genitals which help to give pleasure as well as to reproduce. The mind is also sometimes regarded as one of the subtle aspects of the sense organs because it is the mind that controls everything. Hence, Lord Sri Ram has control over all of them.]

शरण्यत्राणतत्परः ॥ (14) 'Sharanya-traan-tatpar'—The Lord (Sri Ram) is always eager to and engaged in giving protection to those who have taken refuge or shelter with him. ['Sharanya' = to take shelter and refuge with someone, seeking his protection; 'Traan' = to remove or provide relief from torments, grief, pain and miseries; to grant protection, shelter, relief, security etc.; 'Tatpar' = to be eager, diligent, ever-ready and careful to do something.]

वालिप्रमथनो वाग्मी सत्यवाक् सत्यविक्रमः । सत्यव्रतो व्रतफलः सदा हनुमदाश्रयः ॥ ३ ॥

Line no. 3 = वालिप्रमथनो (15) 'Vaali-pramathano'—The Lord (Sri Ram) had killed ('Pramathan') the monkey named Vaali. [Vaali was the elder brother of Sugriv and the king of the monkey race. He had thrashed his younger brother Sugriv due to some misunderstanding and threw him out of the kingdom, thereby usurping his share and right to the throne of Kishkindha, the capital of the kingdom of monkeys. Not only this, Vaali had also kept Sugriv's lawful wife as his mistress, a deed which is totally unethical. Lord Ram had slayed Vaali when Sugriv complained of the injustice that was done to him by his own brother. 'Pramathan' = to stir, churn, kill, destroy.]

वाग्मी (16) 'Vaagmi'—The Lord (Sri Ram) is an expert orator, speaker and preacher; he is an expert with the use of words; his voice and speech are both pleasant and fit for the

occasion. [It implies that Lord Ram is highly erudite, learned, wise and scholarly because he has to speak articulately and in a convincing manner. ‘Vaagmi’ also means that the Lord personifies the glorious virtues of knowledge, erudition and wisdom embodied in the form of goddess Saraswati, the patron goddess of these virtues. Lord Ram, being the Supreme Being, inspires goddess Saraswati to bless great souls of this creation with the grand virtues of wisdom, erudition and knowledge, which are then passed on by them for the benefit of the rest of this creation by expressing themselves with the help of wise words of wisdom. ‘Vaak’ = speech. ‘Vaagmi’ = eloquent, learned, well-spoken, wise in expression.]

सत्यवाक् (17) ‘Satya-vaak’—The Lord (Sri Ram) is always truthful, and he always speaks the truth. [‘Satya’ = truth, truthfulness; ‘Vaak’ = words, speech.]

सत्यविक्रमः । (18) ‘Satya-vikram’—(a) The Lord (Sri Ram) is truly heroic, strong, invincible, powerful, valorous and valiant. (b) The Lord is truly a strong, powerful and invincible warrior. (c) The Lord is strong and powerful and effective in upholding the virtues of Truth, and he forcefully, authoritatively and powerfully enforces the principles of Truth. He is always successful in doing it; he cannot be defeated in this (upholding Truth). [‘Vikram’ = heroic, having valour, valiant, possessing prowess, strength; to be excellent and best in any field, especially that which requires strength and valour.]

सत्यव्रतो (19) ‘Satya-vrato’—The Lord (Sri Ram) is steadfast in upholding the vows and the principles of ‘truthfulness’. The Lord not only resolutely follows the doctrine of Truth himself but has also taken the vow or has promised to ensure its enforcement in this creation. [‘Vrat’ = vow, promise, determination, resolution.]

व्रतफलः (20) ‘Vrat-phal’—(a) The Lord (Sri Ram) is like the auspicious reward got by doing all sorts of austerities, observing strict codes of conduct, and diligently following the laws of virtuousness, righteousness and probity. (b) The Lord is attained by doing these religious duties and keeping auspicious vows. [‘Vrat’ = vow, resolution, observation of religious duties and sacraments, undertaking austerities and undergoing suffering for some religious and noble cause. ‘Phal’ = fruit, reward, result, consequence.]

सदा हनुमदाश्रयः ॥ (21) ‘Sadaa Hanumadaa-sraya’—(a) The Lord (Sri Ram) is a constant source of support and succour for Hanuman. (b) Hanuman always finds his constant succour and eternal refuge with the Lord (Sri Ram). [Hanuman was Lord Ram’s greatest devotee, and he was instrumental in the Lord’s victory over the demons at Lanka and recovery of Sita from the clutches of the demon king Ravana. Though depicted as being a monkey like the other companions of the Lord in the forest and his army, Hanuman was an exceptional case—he was very learned and wise. He spoke fluent Sanskrit, the classical language of ancient India at the time of his first meeting with Lord Ram at the foot of Mt. Rishyamook where the Lord had gone wandering in the search of Sita. Hanuman was the one who had made Sugriv and Lord Ram friends, he was the one who was chosen to go across the ocean to Lanka in search of Sita, he was the first messenger of the Lord who had settled scores with the demons in a token way by burning the city of Lanka and bringing the demon army to its heels, he was the one who had brought the herbs which helped revive Laxman, the younger brother of Lord Ram, when he fell unconscious in the battle at Lanka, and he was the one who had played a pivotal role in the Lord’s final victory over the demons. On more than one occasion, Lord Ram has himself praised Hanuman and said that he will never be able to repay his debts and obligations. ‘Sadaa’ = always; ‘Hanumad’ = pertaining or related to Hanuman; ‘Aasray’

= refuge, shelter, support, help, something or someone to fall back upon in distress and emergencies when one has no other means left.]

कौसल्येयः खरध्वंसी विराधवधपण्डितः । विभीषणपरित्राता दशग्रीवशिरोहरः ॥ ४ ॥

Line no. 4 = कौसल्येयः (22) 'Kausalyeya'—The Lord (Sri Ram) became a son of Kaushalya. [The reading of this verse shows that there is an element of wonder that the Supreme Being, the Supreme Lord of creation who is formless, without attributes, almighty, all-pervading and all-encompassing, should become a son of a human queen known as Kaushalya. The reason is that she had done severe penance in her previous life as Satrupa, who was the chaste wife Manu, the first male human being. Satrupa and Manu had both requested Lord Vishnu, the cosmic form of the Supreme Being which revealed himself before the couple, that they wished to have the Lord as their son. It was due to this boon that the Lord had granted to them at that time that he took birth as the son of Kaushalya, the chief queen of king Dasrath who was Manu in his previous life.]

खरध्वंसी (23) 'Khar-dhwansi'—The Lord (Sri Ram) had crushed (vanquished, killed) the demon named Khar. [This incident happened in the forest known as Panchvati. A demoness known by the name of Supernakha got so infatuated at the beauty of Lord Ram that she assumed the form of a bewitching beauty and proposed marriage to Lord Ram. The all-knowing Lord saw her deceit, and had got her nose and ears chopped-off as a punishment. This enraged her brothers Khar and Dushan. The two demons gathered a huge army and rushed to avenge their sister's deformation. It was in the ensuing battle that Lord Ram had killed Khar along with Dushan. 'Khar' = name of a demon; 'Dhwansi' = one who crushes, demolishes or destroys.]

विराधवधपण्डितः । (24) 'Viraadh-badh-pandit'—The Lord (Sri Ram) had expertly killed the great demon named Viraadh. [This incident occurred in the dense and uninhabitable part of the forest as Lord proceeded ahead after his meeting with sage Atri. Viraadh was a formidable and horrifying demon with a colossus body, strong jaws and sharp teeth. As he approached the Lord, he was grabbing and eating countless wild elephants, buffaloes and lions; a number of human bodies were impaled on the trident lying on his shoulder. As soon as Viraadh appeared before the Lord he was killed. Viraadh immediately assumed a divine form and went to the heaven. In his previous life he was a semi-god known as Vimal-tejomaya Vidhyadhar. He had become a demon as the result of a curse of sage Durvasa. Upon being killed by Lord Ram he found liberation and deliverance from his sinful body of a demon and reverted to his original form. 'Viraadh' = a demon with this name; 'Badh' = kill; 'Pandit' = an expert.]

विभीषणपरित्राता (25) 'Vibhishan-paritraataa'—The Lord (Sri Ram) had protected Vibhishan (from the danger of his elder brother Ravana, the ferocious demon king of Lanka). [Vibhishan was an ardent devotee of Lord Vishnu. He had known that Lord Ram is no one else but Vishnu in a human form. He was kicked out by Ravana when he tried to persuade the latter to give Sita back to Lord Ram and avoid a ruinous war. So he joined Lord Ram and fought alongside the Lord in the epic war of Lanka. When the war was

won by the Lord, Vibhishan was made the king of Lanka. ‘Paritrataa’ = one who provides freedom from torments and miseries.]

दशग्रीवशिरोहरः ॥ (26) ‘Dashgreev-shirohar’—The Lord (Sri Ram) had cut-off the ten heads of Ravana (the demon king of Lanka). [The main purpose of Lord Vishnu’s incarnation as Lord Ram was to kill this cruel demon called Ravana. He had got ten heads as a result of a boon granted by Lord Shiva who was pleased by his offering of his own head to the Lord during a fire sacrifice. Legend has it that inspite of being a demon, Ravana was well-versed in the scriptures and their philosophy. A close reading of the Ramayana shows that he had abducted Sita with the sole intention of getting himself killed by Lord Ram because he knew that it is the only way he can find Mukti (liberation and deliverance) from the sinful body of a demon. ‘Das’ = ten; ‘Greev’ = necks, implying heads; ‘Shir’ = heads; ‘Har’ = one who steals or takes away or dispossesses someone of his possession.]

सप्ततालप्रभेता च हरकोदण्डखण्डनः । जामदग्न्यमहादर्पदलनस्ताटकान्तकृत् ॥ ५ ॥

Line no. 5 = सप्ततालप्रभेता (27) ‘Sapta-taal-prabhettaa’—The Lord (Sri Ram) had cut seven coconut trees with a single arrow. [This allures to the incident when Sugriv, the monkey friend of Lord Ram, had asked the Lord to fell the seven coconut tree as a test to see if the Lord would be able to kill Sugriv’s brother and arch rival Vaali who had usurped the kingdom of Kishkindha from him and thrown him out into exile at Mt. Rishyamook. It so happened that Vaali used to shake these trees unnecessarily and fell their fruits. The sages who partook of these fruits got annoyed and had cursed Vaali that anyone who was able to fell these trees in one attempt would also be able to kill him. ‘Sapta’ = seven; ‘Taal’ = coconut tree; ‘Prabhettaa’ = one who pierces.]

च हरकोदण्डखण्डनः । (28) ‘Harkodanda-khandan’—The Lord (Sri Ram) had broken the bow of Lord Har (Shiva). [This refers to the bow-breaking ceremony at Janakpur. Lord Ram had married Sita by breaking this bow of Lord Shiva. ‘Har’ = Lord Shiva; ‘Kodanda’ = bow; ‘Khandan’ = to break.]

जामदग्न्यमहादर्पदलनस्ताटकान्तकृत् ॥ (29) ‘Jamdagna-mahaadarpa-dalan’—The Lord who had vanquished or crushed the extreme sense of ego, haughtiness and arrogance of sage Parashuram. [This refers to the same bow-breaking when the sage had come angrily to punish anyone who had broken Lord Shiva’s bow. Lord Ram had then subdued him politely. The sage was renowned as a very haughty and proud man who thought himself to be invincible and an arch enemy of the Kshatriya class, the warrior class, to which Lord Ram belonged. ‘Jamdagna’ = sage Parashuram; ‘Maha’ = great; ‘Darpa’ = arrogance, haughtiness, hypocrisy, vanity, false pride, ego; ‘Dalan’ = to vanquish, crush, destroy, trample underfoot, eliminate, subdue.]

(30) ‘Tatakaanta-krit’—The Lord (Sri Ram) had brought about an end to (i.e. killed) the demoness named Tadka. [She was killed when she attacked Lord Ram, his brother Laxman, and sage Vishwamitra when the three were on the way to the sage’s hermitage from Ayodhya. ‘Taadka’ = a demoness; ‘Anta’ = to bring an end to, kill; ‘Krit’ = a deed or action, to do something, to bring about some happening to fruition.]

वेदान्तपारो वेदात्मा भवबन्धैकभेषजः । दूषणत्रिशिरोऽरिश्च त्रिमूर्तिस्त्रिगुणस्त्रयी ॥ ६ ॥

Line no. 6 = वेदान्तपारो (31) ‘Vedaanta-paaro’—(a) The Lord (Sri Ram) is beyond the reach of the Vedas. (b) The Lord who is an expert in the Vedas. [The Vedas are the most ancient scriptures of India. Originally they were one continuous chain of hymns meant primarily meant to be used during fire sacrifices. Later on sage Veda Vyas classified them into four categories according to the needs of the fire sacrifice. Thus now we have four Vedas known as the Rig/Rik Veda, Sam Veda, Yajur Veda and Atharva Veda. The Yajur Veda is further divided into Shukla and Krishna branches. This name of the Lord has two meanings—one, it means that even the most ancient treatise on religion is unable to tell with certainty who is that Supreme Being to whom the hymns are being said and offerings are being made. And two, it means that Lord Ram is an expert in the most profound and esoteric knowledge contained in the Vedas. ‘Veda’ = the primary scriptures which are considered as the repository of knowledge; ‘Anta’ = end; ‘Paaro’ = to be beyond its reach.]

वेदात्मा (32) ‘Vedaa-tma’—The Lord (Sri Ram) is the soul (‘Atma’) representing the essence, the spiritual truth, and the great principles of religion taught by the Vedas. [Lord Ram is a personified form of the essence of the principal ancient scriptures known as the Vedas. Even as a body is dead without the soul, the Vedas would lose their meaning and relevance if the Lord is removed from them. All the Vedas preach about the Supreme Being who is none else but Lord Ram.]

भवबन्धैकभेषजः । (33) ‘Bhav-bandhaik-bheshaj’—The Lord (Sri Ram) is like the only remedy (‘Bheshaj’) for all ills created by this mundane and deluding world; it is the Lord who is the only medium by which one can find freedom from the fetters represented by this entangling and deluding world; the Lord helps one unshackle oneself from this world which is like a formidable bondage. Lord Ram is like an infallible herb that can cure all the ailments that afflict a creature because of his involvement in this world which is like a huge and abominable shackle. ‘Bhav’ = the world of delusions and entanglements; ‘Bhandha’ = fetter, shackle, bondage, slavery, to be tied down, entanglements, to be enmeshed in; ‘Bheshaj’ = medicine, herb, remedy, drug.]

दूषणत्रिशिरोऽरिश्च (34) ‘Dushan-trishiro-arishcha’—The Lord (Sri Ram) is an enemy (‘Ari’) of the two demons known as Dushan and Trishira. [These two demons had accompanied Khar to attack Lord Ram after the incidence of deformation of the demoness Supernakha. Refer name no. 23. The word ‘Ari’ means an enemy.]

त्रिमूर्तिस्त्रिगुणस्त्रयी ॥ (35) ‘Trimurti’—The Lord (Sri Ram) is a personified form of the Trinity Gods—viz. Lord Brahma the creator, Lord Vishnu the sustainer and protector, and Lord Shiva the concluder of creation. [‘Tri’ = three; ‘Murti’ = form, image.]

(36) ‘Triguna’—The Lord (Sri Ram) is a foundation upon which all the three (‘Tri’) legendary and celebrated Gunas rest; the Lord is a personified form of the three Gunas. [These three Gunas are known as Sata Guna, Raja Guna and Tama Guna. They decide the character, the temperament, the inherent nature, the thought processes and the behaviour of all living beings in this world. The Sata Guna is the best, the Tama Guna is

the worst, and the Raja Guna is the medium quality. Since the entire world is a revelation of the same Supreme Being known as Ram, it follows that the Lord also embodies these three Gunas because these Gunas are part of creation.]

(37) ‘Trayi’—The Lord who personifies the three Vedas, as well as all the three aspects of creation (such as the past, the present and the future). [‘Trayi’ = the three principle Vedas—the Rig/Rik Veda, the Sam Veda and the Yajur Veda.]

त्रिविक्रमस्त्रिलोकात्मा पुण्यचारित्रकीर्तनः । त्रिलोकरक्षको धन्वी दण्डकारण्यवासकृत् ॥ ७॥

Line no. 7 = त्रिविक्रमस्त्रिलोकात्मा (38) ‘Trivikram’—The Lord (Sri Ram) had measured the entire creation/universe in three steps during his incarnation as Vaaman, the dwarf mendicant. [This is the fifth incarnation of Vishnu. When Bali, the grandson of Prahalad for whom Vishnu had incarnated as Nrisingh, conquered the entire world and deprived Indra, the king of Gods who ruled over the heavens, Vishnu had taken the dwarfish form of a Brahmin mendicant to retrieve the heaven for Indra when he was requested by Aditi, the mother of Gods, to do so. He approached Bali, who was famous for his charities, as a ‘Vaaman’ or a dwarf, and begged him for ground sufficient enough to be covered by his three small steps. When the unsuspecting Bali agreed, Vaaman measured the entire earth with one step, the heaven with the second step, and for the third step he measured Bali’s own head symbolizing the crown of the kingdom of Bali. He put his third step on Bali’s head and pushed the latter to the nether world. Hence, Vishnu is also called ‘Trivikram’—one who conquered the three worlds in three steps. But the Lord is so kind and gracious that he saw the injustice done to a magnanimous Bali who had been righteous and firm in his vow of making charity, and never rescinded on his commitments. So, the Lord made him the king of the nether world, and himself took up the job of protecting him there as his gatekeeper. This incarnation of Lord Vishnu is his fifth and followed the Nrisingh form which was the fourth. The idea behind this Vaaman incarnation is that even the most humble looking man, represented by the diminutive Vaaman in this story, can indeed have the stupendous power of the Spirit that even the most powerful gods and kings lack.]

Since the word ‘Tri’ means three, and ‘Vikram’ means one who has obtained victory convincingly, the term ‘Trivikram’ is used to mean Lord Vaaman as he had established his lordship over the three worlds by simply and literally walking or stepping over them.]

(39) ‘Trilok-aatma’—The Lord (Sri Ram) is the Atma (soul) of the entire living creation consisting of the three worlds (‘Trilok’ = the terrestrial world, the subterranean world, and the heavens).

पुण्यचारित्रकीर्तनः । (40) ‘Punya-charitra-kirtan’—The divine deeds of the Lord (Sri Ram) are most auspicious and holy to narrate. [‘Punya’ = auspicious, holy and righteous deeds; ‘Charitra’ = deeds done by someone during his lifetime; his character, virtues, qualities and personality; ‘Kirtan’ = to sing aloud, applaud, praise publicly and laud someone’s greatness and great deeds vocally and articulately so that others can hear of them and join such applause.]

त्रिलोकरक्षको (41) 'Trilok-rakshako'—The Lord (Sri Ram) is a protector of the three worlds ['Trilok'— the terrestrial world, the subterranean world, and the heavens. 'Rakshako'— one who protects.]

धन्वी (42) 'Dhanvi'—The Lord (Sri Ram) holds a glorious bow (in his hands). ['Dhanush', the bow, is called 'Saarang'. 'Dhanvi' is the holder of this bow. Hence, it refers to Lord Vishnu who holds the Saarang bow. This bow is also known as the 'Shaankhya Dhanush'. It was made from the bones of demon named Shaankhya-chuda after he was killed by Lord Shiva. According to *Krishna Upanishad* of the Atharva Veda tradition, verse no. 23, the Shaarang bow of Lord Vishnu stands for the Vaishnavi Maya which is the primary form of Maya closely associated with Vishnu. As a protector of the entire creation, Lord Ram—who is none else but Lord Vishnu himself, holds this bow to protect the entire creation.]

दण्डकारण्यवासकृत् ॥ (43) 'Danda-kaaranya-vaaskrit'—The Lord (Sri Ram) had lived ('Vaas') in the forest called Danda-kaaranya and performed or did ('Krit') many mystical deeds there. [The Dandakaaranya was the most uninhabitable and fierce part of the forest. It was infested by demons and ogres. This forest was the area where Lord Ram had spent the major part of his forest exile, and it covers all the events as mentioned in the 'Aranya kand' of the epic Ramayana/Ram Charit Manas.]

An interesting legend is associated with this forest. 'Dandak' was one of the hundred princes who were the sons of king Ikshvaku dynasty. Dandak was assigned to rule over this area. He was of a promiscuous nature and had once molested Arjaa, the daughter of his own Guru, moral preceptor and teacher, named Shukraachaarya. The Guru cursed him, and as a result the entire kingdom was decimated and reduced to an uninhabitable and barren stretch of land. Since Dandak was the cause of this, the entire land was named after him to remind and warn the coming generation to be careful about what they do and how they behave. Since it was left alone from being overcrowded, sages, hermits and ascetics made it their home. Being thus blessed by their august presence, some of the curse was neutralized and it got the name 'Janasthaan'—a place that was inhabited by Gyanis or learned and realised souls. According to modern historians, the area of modern India that falls around Nasik, a city along the western seaboard of the country, was the area called Danda-kaaranya in ancient times.]

अहल्यापावनश्चैव पितृभक्तो वरप्रदः । जितेन्द्रियो जितक्रोधो जितलोभो जगद्गुरुः ॥ ८ ॥

Line no. 8 = अहल्यापावनश्चैव (44) 'Ahalyaa-paavan'—The Lord (Sri Ram) had made Ahilya 'Paavan' or pure and freed her from her curse. [This refers to the incident when the Lord had touched a rock with his feet while on the way to sage Vishwamitra's hermitage. This rock was Ahilya, the wife of sage Gautam, who had been turned into this form due to the curse of the sage due to some misunderstanding. The touch of the dust of the Lord's feet had freed her from this curse, and she resumed her divine form and went back to her husband.]

पितृभक्तो (45) 'Pitri-bhakto'—The Lord (Sri Ram) was very devoted (obedient) to his father (Dasrath). ['Pitri' = related to one's father; 'Bhakta' = one who is devoted to someone.]

वरप्रदः । (46) ‘Var-prad’—The Lord (Sri Ram) grants boons and blessings (to his devotees and followers). [‘Var’ = boons, blessings, grants, grace; ‘Prad’ = to give, bestow, grant, bless.]

जितेन्द्रियो (47) ‘Jitendriya’—The Lord (Sri Ram) has exemplary self-restraint over his sense organs. [‘Jita’ = to obtain victory; ‘Jitendra’ = one who has obtained such victory; ‘Indri’ = sense organs. Refer name no. 13.]

जितक्रोधो (48) ‘Jit-krodho’—The Lord (Sri Ram) has conquered/vanquished anger; the Lord has obtained victory over anger and wrathfulness. [‘Jit’ = to conquer and obtain victory over; ‘Krodh’ = anger.]

जितलोभो (49) ‘Jit-lobho’—The Lord (Sri Ram) has conquered greed, avarice and rapacity. [‘Lobha’ = greed, avarice, rapacity.]

जगद्गुरुः ॥ (50) ‘Jagat-guru’—The Lord (Sri Ram) is the preceptor and moral guide (‘Guru’) for the whole world (‘Jagat’). [The Lord teaches the world by his own example.]

ऋक्षवानरसंघाती चित्रकूटसमाश्रयः । जयन्तत्राणवरदः सुमित्रापुत्रसेवितः ॥ ९ ॥

Line no. 9 = ऋक्षवानरसंघाती (51) ‘Riksha-vaanar-sanghaati’—The Lord (Sri Ram) had assembled, commanded and led an army of bears and monkeys. [This army accompanied the Lord from Kishkindha and helped him conquer Lanka and kill the demons led by Ravana to retrieve Sita who was abducted by this demon. The monkey army was led by Sugriv, the monkey king, and Jamvant, the bear king. ‘Riksha’ = bears; ‘Vaananar’ = monkeys; ‘Sanghaati’ = a companion, a friend, an associate, an ally.]

चित्रकूटसमाश्रयः । (52) ‘Chitrakoot-samaasraya’—The Lord (Sri Ram) had lived and had taken shelter in Chitrakoot (during his sojourn in the forest). [‘Chitrakoot’ was a pleasant area of the forest where Lord Ram lived before he entered the fearful area of the forest known as Dandakaaranya. Chitrakoot was where Bharat, his younger brother, had gone to try to persuade the Lord to come back to Ayodhya. In modern India it is in the central part of the country. ‘Aasray’ = to take shelter in, to live or dwell in; a dwelling place.]

जयन्तत्राणवरदः (53) ‘Jayanta-traan-varad’—The Lord (Sri Ram) had granted pardon to Jayant and saved him from the fear of death that was tormenting him. [Jayant was a mischievous son of Indra, the king of Gods. Once he had wished to test the might of Lord Ram, and so had assumed the form of a crow and pricked at the feet of Sita. When the Lord saw blood oozing out of the wound, he plucked a reed and used it as an arrow to punish Jayant. The latter went all over the heaven seeking protection, but no one—even his father Indra, was able to give him any assurance against the wrath of Lord Ram. Finally, seeing him terrified, sage Narad (pronounced as Naa-rud) advised him to go plead for mercy with the Lord himself. When Jayant came to seek pardon from Lord Ram, the Lord excused him and granted him immunity from death. But since his arrow could not be failed, the Lord decided to make Jayant blind in one eye. It is believed that all the crows became blind in one eye since then. This is also the reason why crows are regarded as bad and ugly birds who are meat eaters. ‘Jayant’ = the son of Indra; ‘Tran’ = to remove or provide relief from torments, grief, pain and miseries; to grant protection,

shelter, relief, security etc.; ‘Varad’ = to grant, bless, give boon, to assure immunity from fear.]

सुमित्रापुत्रसेवितः ॥ (54) ‘Sumitraa-putra-sevit’—The Lord (Sri Ram) was faithfully and diligently served by the son of Sumitra (i.e. Laxman, his younger brother who accompanied the Lord to the forest). [‘Sumitra’ = the mother of Laxman; ‘Putra’ = son; ‘Sevit’ = served by.]

सर्वदेवाधिदेवश्च मृतवानरजीवनः । मायामारीचहन्ता च महाभागो महाभुजः ॥ १० ॥

Line no. 10 = सर्वदेवाधिदेवश्च (55) ‘Sarwa-devaa-dhi-dev’—The Lord (Sri Ram) is the Chief of all the Gods in this creation, he is superior to all of them and their Lord as he is the Supreme Being. [‘Sarwa’ = all; ‘Dev’ = God, Lord; ‘Devaa-dhi-dev’ = superior to all the Gods.]

मृतवानरजीवनः । (56) ‘Mrit-vaanar-jivan’—The Lord (Sri Ram) had granted fresh life to the monkeys who had died (during the war of Lanka). [‘Mrit’ = those who had died; ‘Vaanar’ = monkey; ‘Jivan’ = life.]

मायामारीचहन्ता (57) ‘Maayaa-maarich-hantaa’—The Lord (Sri Ram) had killed the demon Marich who had assumed a deceitful form (of a golden deer so that Ravana could steal Sita). [This incident happened in the part of the forest called Panch-Vati. Ravana was instigated by Supernakha, a demoness who was earlier deformed by Laxman on the instructions of Lord Ram when she tried to lure the Lord into having illicit relationship with her. He forced Marich to assume the form of a golden deer so attractive that it would motivate Sita to ask Lord Ram to bring it to her. Once the Lord went to capture it or hunt it down, Ravana got an opportunity to abduct Sita from the hermitage. Meanwhile, Lord Ram pursued Marich in the form of a golden deer and killed him. ‘Maya’ = deceitful, illusionary; ‘Maarich’ = a demon; ‘Hantaa’ = killer, slayer, eliminator, destroyer.]

च महाभागो (58) ‘Mahaa-bhaago’—The Lord (Sri Ram) is most fortunate, extremely lucky, and blessed with unmatched good fortunes. [‘Maha’ = great, immense, vast; ‘Bhaagya’ = good luck and fortune; ‘Bhaago’ = one who is fortunate and lucky.]

महाभुजः ॥ (59) ‘Mahaa-bhuj’—The Lord (Sri Ram) has long arms. [That is, the Lord has a long reach, that is nothing that he can’t do or achieve, and he gives immense protection to his devotees with his able and strong hands. ‘Maha’ = great, large, long, vast; ‘Bhuj’ = arms.]

सर्वदेवस्तुतः सौम्यो ब्रह्मण्यो मुनिसत्तमः । महायोगी महोदारः सुग्रीवस्थिरराज्यदः ॥ ११ ॥

Line no. 11 = सर्वदेवस्तुतः (60) ‘Sarwa-dev-stut’—The Lord (Sri Ram) is praised, respected, honoured, revered and lauded by all the Gods. [‘Sarwa’ = all; ‘Dev’ = gods; ‘Stut’ = praised, lauded, honoured.]

सौम्यो (61) ‘Saumya’—The Lord (Sri Ram) is calm, poised, polite, civil and courteous.

ब्रह्मण्यो (62) 'Brahmanyō'—The Lord (Sri Ram) is dear to the Brahmins. ['Brahmins' are traditionally regarded as being learned and wise people. They are said to be ordained by the creator to act as preachers and moral teachers and guides for the rest of the society.]
 मुनिसत्तमः । (63) 'Muni-sattam'—The Lord (Sri Ram) is the best amongst the sages and seers. The Lord has all the best of the divine and the glorious virtues that great sages, hermits, seers and saints possess. ['Muni' = sages, hermits; 'Sattam' = the best.]
 महायोगी (64) 'Mahaa-yogi'—The Lord (Sri Ram) is a great ascetic and hermit. ['Mahaa' = great; 'Yogi' = ascetic, hermit.]
 महोदारः (65) 'Maho-daar'—The Lord (Sri Ram) is most magnanimous, benevolent and gracious; the Lord gives freely, liberally, charitably and without reservations. ['Maho' = great; 'Udaar' = magnanimous, benevolent, charitable, kind, broad-hearted giver.]
 सुग्रीवस्थिरराज्यदः ॥ (66) 'Sugriv-sthir-raajyad'—The Lord (Sri Ram) gave a stable (unchallenged) kingdom to Sugriv (the monkey king of Kishkindha whose army had helped the Lord conquer Lanka and retrieve Sita). ['Sugriv' = the monkey king of Kishkindha; 'Sthir' = steady, constant, unmoving and established; 'Raajyad' = to give kingdom to, to establish someone as a king, to grant a kingdom.]

सर्वपुण्याधिकफलः स्मृतसर्वाघनाशनः । आदिपुरुषो महापुरुषः परमः पुरुषस्तथा ॥ १२ ॥

Line no. 12 = सर्वपुण्याधिकफलः (67) 'Sarwa-punyaadhik-phal'—The Lord (Sri Ram) embodies all the greatest of rewards/fruits ('Phal') obtainable by doing things that are righteous, auspicious and proper (known as 'Punya'). ['Sarwa' = all; 'Punya' = holy, auspicious and righteous deeds; 'Aadhik' = Punya etc., the highest or the best of results that can be obtained by doing the best kind of Punya and all such other acts and deeds that are good and right; 'Phal' = fruit, reward, result, consequences.]
 स्मृतसर्वाघनाशनः । (68) 'Smrit-sarwaaghanaashan'—The Lord (Sri Ram) whose mere remembrance can destroy or eliminate all the gravest or densest of sins and their attendant greatest of misfortunes and punishment. ['Smrit' = to remember, invoke; 'Sarwa' = all; 'Ghan' = dense, grave; 'Naashan' = destroy, eliminate.]
 आदिपुरुषो (69) 'Aadi-purush'—The Lord (Sri Ram) is the primary and the most ancient Male (cosmic Lord) of creation. [It is from this 'Aadi Purush' that the rest of the creation has come into being. He is also called the 'Viraat Purush'—the Lord who is as vast as the creation, and who is all-pervading and all-encompassing in this creation. There was nothing before the Aadi Purush. 'Aadi' = from the beginning, primary, primordial, ancient, initial, commencement of creation; 'Purush' = Male.]
 महापुरुषः (70) 'Mahaa-purush'—The Lord (Sri Ram) is great, exalted and a majestic Being (literally a Male—a 'Purush', but implying the entire spectrum of the living world). ['Mahaa' = great; 'Purush' = Male.]
 परमः पुरुषस्तथा ॥ (71) 'Param-purush'—The Lord (Sri Ram) is the Supreme Being. ['Param' = supreme and most exalted; 'Purush' = Male.]

पुण्योदयो महासारः पुराणपुरुषोत्तमः । स्मितवक्त्रो मितभाषी पूर्वभाषी च राघवः ॥ १३ ॥

Line no. 13 = पुण्योदयो (72) ‘Punyo-dayo’—The Lord (Sri Ram) inspires or motivates goodness and auspicious virtues to arise, emerge, grow, develop and bloom. [‘Punya’ = auspiciousness and virtuousness; ‘Udaya’ = to rise, emerge.]

महासारः (73) ‘Mahaa-saar’—The Lord (Sri Ram) is the greatest and the only essence of creation; the Lord is the only truthful principle of creation; the Lord is the essence of all spiritual pursuit and the teaching of the scriptures; the Lord is the essence of creation without which the creation would lose its meaning and existence; the Lord is the essence of all the teachings of the scriptures without which all these teachings would be meaningless. [‘Mahaa’ = great; ‘Saar’ = essence.]

पुराणपुरुषोत्तमः । (74) ‘Puraan-purushottam’—(a) The Lord (Sri Ram) is lauded, applauded, praised, recognized and honoured as being the most ancient Being, and as being the best amongst all the Gods mentioned in the Purans. (b) The Purans have recognized that the Lord is the best amongst all the Males (living beings) in this creation. [The term ‘Purshottam’ is usually employed to mean the Supreme Being known as Lord Vishnu whose incarnation is Lord Ram. The word ‘Puran’ has two meanings—one of course means ancient, and the other means a group of ancient scriptures narrating mythological history. Therefore, both the above interpretations can be made. ‘Purhottam’ means ‘the best amongst all Males’. Since all the ‘Gods’ are also males, and they are all super-natural Beings who are superior to the human beings, it follows that Lord Ram is best amongst all these Gods also.]

स्मितवक्त्रो (75) ‘Smit-vaktro’—The Lord (Sri Ram) always has a sweet, pleasant and endearing smile on his lips. [The Lord is very dear and pleasing to look at, and he is always cheerful, warm and welcoming. ‘Smit’ = sweet smile; ‘Vaktra’ = mouth.]

मितभाषी (76) ‘Mit-bhaashi’—The Lord (Sri Ram) speaks little, moderately, and only when required. [‘Mit’ = moderate, sparingly, little; ‘Bhaashi’ = one who speaks, speaker.]

पूर्वभाषी (77) ‘Purva-bhaashi’—The Lord (Sri Ram) is the most ancient speaker (as he is the Supreme Being before whom no one spoke anything—simply because there was no creation and a speaker before him). [‘Purva’ = first, before, preceding; ‘Bhaashi’ = speaker.]

च राघवः ॥ (78) ‘Raaghav’—The Lord (Sri Ram) had taken a birth in the clan/dynasty of king Raghu (of Ayodhya).

अनन्तगुणगम्भीरो धीरोदात्तगुणोत्तरः । मायामानुषचारित्रो महादेवाभिपूजितः ॥ १४ ॥

Line no. 14 = अनन्तगुणगम्भीरो (79) ‘Anant-guna-gambhiro’—The Lord (Sri Ram) has measureless and countless virtues and qualities that are profound and great. He is tranquil, calm, serious, sober and earnest. [In spite of the Lord possessing great and profound good virtues, he is not showing them off or boasting of them. The Lord is not

haughty or arrogant or egoist that he has such exemplary qualities in him. ‘Anant’ = without an end; ‘Guna’ = virtues and qualities; ‘Gambhir’ = dense, profound, serious, sober, tranquil and calm.]

धीरोदात्तगुणोत्तरः । (80) ‘Dhiro-daata-gunottar’—The Lord (Sri Ram) possesses the grand virtues of steadiness, patience, courage and fortitude (‘Dhir’), is a liberal, charitable and magnanimous donor (‘Daata’), and is beyond the tainting effects of the various Gunas (qualities—‘Gunottar’).

मायामानुषचारित्रो (81) ‘Maayaa-maanush-chaaritra’—The Lord (Sri Ram) had assumed the illusionary form of a human being, and behaved like one. [To treat Lord Ram as an ordinary human being is therefore wrong, as this form is only an illusionary form created by the delusion-creating powers—called ‘Maya’—of the Supreme Being who has no forms. ‘Maya’ = delusions, illusions; ‘Maanush’ = man, human being, ‘Chaaritra’ = deeds done, life and character.]

महादेवाभिपूजितः ॥ (82) ‘Mahaa-devaa-bhipujita’—The Lord (Sri Ram) is worshipped by the greatest of Gods; the Lord is worshipped by Lord Shiva known as Mahaa-deva. [‘Mahaa’ = great and most exalted; ‘Devaa’ = God; ‘Maha-dev’ = Lord Shiva who occupies an exalted position amongst the pantheon of Gods as he is regarded as very wise, enlightened and self-realised; ‘Pujita’ = worshipped.]

सेतुकृज्जितवारीशः सर्वतीर्थमयो हरिः । श्यामाङ्गः सुन्दरः शूरः पीतवासा धनुर्धरः ॥ १५ ॥

Line no. 15 = सेतुकृज्जितवारीशः (83) ‘Setu-krit’—The Lord (Sri Ram) built a bridge (over the ocean to cross over to Lanka). [‘Setu’ = bridge; ‘Krit’ = a deed or action.]

(84) ‘Jit-vaarish’—The Lord (Sri Ram) had conquered the Lord of rain (ocean). [‘Jit’ = to win, conquer, vanquish; ‘Vaarish’ = Lord of rain. The ocean is the ‘Lord of rain’ because it is from the ocean that the clouds derive their quota of rain. The water of the ocean evaporates due to the heat of the sun, and when this reaches higher atmosphere it cools down and condenses in the form of clouds. Without the ocean there will be no rain-bearing clouds simply because there will be no reservoir as large and vast and endless as the ocean to supply the clouds with their extraordinary large requirement of water molecules.]

{It will be pertinent to note here that we must read these two names together in order to make sense of them. These names refer to the event when Lord Ram had constructed the bridge over the ocean to reach Lanka to kill the fierce demons and retrieve Sita held captive by their king Ravana. The patron god of the ocean, Vaarish, would not give the Lord a passage inspite of the Lord’s earnest pleadings. So finally the Lord drew his bow and arrow to dry up the ocean. Then the ocean became terrified, and conceded to the Lord request. Thus the bridge was built by the Lord. This bridge symbolically implied the Lord’s victory over the ocean which was a formidable and horrifying obstacle to be overcome.

Now the meaning of the two names would become clear. They mean that—‘The Lord tamed the ocean by constructing a bridge over it. The Lord overcame the formidable barrier created by the ocean that prevented him from crossing over to Lanka by constructing a bridge across it. The Lord literally became victorious by winning the war

(‘Jit’) of attrition with the ocean (‘Vaarish’), which was stubborn and not allowing the Lord to cross over it so as to reach Lanka, by his magical deed or act (‘Krit’) of constructing a bridge (‘Setu’) across it (the ocean). }

सर्वतीर्थमयो (85) ‘Sarwa-tirtha-mayo’—The Lord (Sri Ram) is an embodiment of all the holy pilgrim sites. The holy form of the Lord is equivalent to the holiness of all the pilgrim places taken together. [That is, the Lord is as holy as any holy site independently or all the holy sites taken together. Thus, if one takes refuge at the holy feet of Lord Ram, then he is deemed to have gone to a great religious place. All the goodness and spiritual welfare and benefits that can accrue to a person by visiting holy pilgrim places are also available to him if he takes refuge in the holy feet of Lord Ram. ‘Sarwa’ = all; ‘Tirtha’ = pilgrim sites; ‘Mayo’ = like, equivalent to.]

हरिः । (86) ‘Hari’—The Lord (Sri Ram) steals or takes away (all the vices, negative qualities, sins, evil, misfortunes and the like from his devotees so that they do not have to suffer their consequences). [‘Hari’ is a term applied to Lord Vishnu. It literally means one who steals. But it does not mean that the Supreme Lord steals valuables and material things from men; he is not a ‘thief’ or a ‘thug’. The Lord takes away vices and the like from his devotees so that they are rendered pure and holy.]

श्यामाङ्गः (87) ‘Shyaamaang’—The Lord (Sri Ram) has a form that is dark-complexioned. [The Lord has a dark-complexioned body like that of a rain-bearing cloud or that of the dark-blue sky. This colour has a metaphoric and symbolic significance. Lord Vishnu is the Supreme Being who is as vast, infinite, fathomless, formless, all-encompassing and all-pervading as the sky. He is the sustainer and protector of life in this creation like the rain which is like the nectar of life for the earth. The earth and all its life would parch to death if there was no rain. So this allusion to the colour of the rain-bearing cloud and the sky is used when referring to the complexion of the Lord. ‘Shyaam’ = dark, black, deep-blue, purple; ‘Ang’ = parts of the body.]

सुन्दरः (88) ‘Sundar’—The Lord (Sri Ram) is beautiful and charming.

शूरः (89) ‘Shur’ (pronounced as ‘Shoor’ as in *shoe* + *moor*)—The Lord (Sri Ram) is brave, valiant and courageous.

पीतवासा (90) ‘Peet-vaasa’—The Lord (Sri Ram) wears a yellow coloured cloth called the Pitambar. [‘Peet’ = yellow; ‘Vaasa’ = cloth used to wrap the body.]

धनुर्धरः ॥ (91) ‘Dhanur-dhar’—The Lord (Sri Ram) holds a bow. [See name no. 42 also. ‘Dhanur’ = bow; ‘Dhar’ = to hold.]

सर्वयज्ञाधिपो यज्ञो जरामरणवर्जितः ॥ शिवलिङ्गप्रतिष्ठाता सर्वाघगणवर्जितः ॥ १६ ॥

Line no. 16 = सर्वयज्ञाधिपो (92) ‘Sarwa-yagyaadhip’—The Lord (Sri Ram) presides over all fire sacrifices and other religious rituals. The Lord is the Supreme Deity to whom all the sacrifices are made and offerings meant for. [‘Sarwa’ = all; ‘Yagya’ = fire and other religious sacrifices; ‘Dhip’ = presiding Lord or deity.]

यज्ञो (93) 'Yagyo'—The Lord (Sri Ram) is himself a personified form of the fire sacrifice and other religious rituals. The Lord is as holy and pure as the sacrifice itself.

जरामरणवर्जितः ॥ (94) 'Jaraa-maran-varjit'—The Lord (Sri Ram) does not become old, does not suffer from old age related problems such as the degeneration of the body, and he does not die. [This is simply because the Lord is eternal and imperishable. 'Jaraa' = old age; 'Maran' = death; 'Varjit' = is immune from, is prevented from.]

शिवलिङ्गप्रतिष्ठाता (95) 'Shiv-linga-pratishthaata'—The Lord (Sri Ram) had established and consecrated the Shiva Lingam (a symbol of Shiva). [This refers to the Shiva Lingam that Lord Ram had established before crossing the ocean to Lanka. This 'Shiva Lingam' is called 'Rameshwaram' after Lord Ram. It has two meanings—'the Lord, Ishwar, of Ram—i.e. Lord Shiva whom Sri Ram himself worshipped', and 'the Lord (Shiva) whose Ishwar (Lord God) is none else but Sri Ram—i.e. Lord Shiva himself worships Lord Sri Ram'. 'Shiva-linga' = a symbol or idol of Shiva; 'Pratishthaata' = one who establishes.]

सर्वघणवर्जितः ॥ (96) 'Sarwaaghagana-varjit'—The Lord (Sri Ram) is absolutely free from any kind of inauspiciousness, negativity, vices, sin and evil etc., no matter how grave and overbearing they may be. All such bad and lowly qualities in this creation, even of the most potent kind, are prevented from tainting the Lord in any way. He is immune from their influence and negative effects. ['Sarwa' = all; 'Agha' = sins and negativity; 'Ghan' = density of quality; 'Varjit' = prevented, immune, prohibited.]

परमात्मा परं ब्रह्म सच्चिदानन्दविग्रहः । परं ज्योतिः परं धाम पराकाशः परात्परः ॥ १७ ॥

Line no. 17 = परमात्मा (97) 'Pamaatma'—The Lord (Sri Ram) is the Supreme Atma, the Supreme Soul, the Supreme Being, and the Supreme Lord God of creation. He is the transcendental Atma or the transcendental Being. ['Par' = supreme and transcendental; 'Atma' = soul.]

परं ब्रह्म (98) 'Param Brahm'—The Lord (Sri Ram) is the Supreme Being in this creation who is known as 'Brahm'. [The word 'Brahm' refers to the cosmic Consciousness and also as Pranav and OM. Brahm is uniform, all-pervading, all-encompassing, omnipresent, omniscient, omnipotent and supreme universal Truth of existence. Everything has come into being from Brahm and would finally merge into Brahm. This term is used extensively in the Upanishads to imply the cosmic Consciousness known as the Parmaatma or the Supreme Being.]

सच्चिदानन्दविग्रहः । (99) 'Sacchidaanand-vigraha'—The Lord (Sri Ram) is a personified form or image (Vigraha) of 'truth' (Satya), 'consciousness and enlightenment' (Chid), and their attendant 'bliss' (Anand). ['Saccha' = true; 'Chid' = consciousness; 'Anand' = bliss; 'Vigraha' = image, form, idol.]

परं ज्योतिः (100) 'Param-jyoti'—The Lord (Sri Ram) is an embodiment of supreme light; the Lord is the 'supreme source of light' that illuminates everything in this creation. [The word 'Param' implies something that is supreme, the most magnificent, the highest and the best. The word 'Jyoti' means 'light'. Therefore the meaning is that the Lord is the supreme source of all knowledge, wisdom and enlightenment that illuminates the world by removing the darkness of ignorance. It is a metaphoric term to also mean a supreme

entity that injects life (represented by light) into the otherwise lifeless world (represented by darkness).

परं धाम (101) 'Param-dhaam'—The Lord (Sri Ram) is the ultimate destination and abode for the soul of the creature; he is the final destination where all those who want to go to heaven reach; he is the final resting place for the entire creation and its creatures. ['Param' = supreme; 'Dhaam' = abode.]

पराकाशः (102) 'Paraa-kaash'—The Lord (Sri Ram) is like the transcendental space of the great sky element—i.e. he is like the deep recesses of the cosmos or the sky ('Akash') which is vast, fathomless, without any attributes, taintless, uncorrupt, all-pervading, all-encompassing and all-including. ['Paraa' = transcendental; 'Akaash' = sky.]

परात्परः ॥ (103) 'Paraatpar'—The Lord (Sri Ram) is transcendental and supreme. The Lord is beyond the reach and purview of the perception of the sense organs as well as of the mind and the intellect.

परीशः पारगः पारः सर्वभूतात्मकः शिवः । इति श्रीरामचन्द्रस्य नाम्नामष्टोत्तरं शतम् ॥ १८ ॥

गुह्याद्गुह्यतरं देवि तव स्नेहात् प्रकीर्तितम् ॥ १९ ॥ (पद्म० उत्तर० २८१। ३०-४८)

Line no. 18 = परेशः (104) 'Paresh'—The Lord (Sri Ram) is the supreme Lord. The Lord Sri Ram is the supreme and the best ruler. ['Par' = supreme and transcendental; 'Ish' = lord.]

पारगः (105) 'Paarag'—(a) The Lord (Sri Ram) helps all the creatures to cross this world of transmigration and delusions. (b) The Lord helps everyone to cross the ocean of miseries, sins and misfortunes.

पारः (106) 'Paar'—The Lord (Sri Ram) is transcendental and established beyond everything else in this creation.

सर्वभूतात्मकः (107) 'Sarwa-bhutaatmak'—(a) The Lord (Sri Ram) is the Atma (soul; the consciousness) that lives in the bosom of all living creatures. The Lord has revealed himself as the Atma of all living beings. All mortal creatures are a form of the Lord. The mortal living beings are different images of the same Lord who has revealed himself in all their forms. (b) The Lord is revealed in the form of all the primary elements of creation known as the Bhuts; he is the essence of these elements. [The mortal creatures are called 'Bhut' because they are mortal, are subject to death, and are not the truth of creation like the phantom or the ghost which are illusionary by nature and have no real existence. The other meaning of the term 'Bhut' is the element. There are said to be five primary elements in creation from which the rest of the visible creation was moulded by the supreme Creator. These elements are sky, air, water, fire and earth. All living beings have their gross physical body made out of these five elements. 'Sarwa' = all; 'Bhut' = ghost, phantom, primary elements of creation, mortal living beings; 'Bhutaatmak' = in the form of the Atma or soul or consciousness or essence or the fundamental basis of these Bhuts.]

शिवः । (108) 'Shiv'—The Lord (Sri Ram) is holy, beautiful, truthful, eternal, enlightened, wise, and consciousness personified. [The word 'Shiva' pertains to all these eclectic virtues at once.]

Line no. 18-19: Lord Shiva said to Parvati—‘So concludes the one hundred divine Names of Lord Ramchandra. Goddess (Parvati), these are very esoteric, mystical and enigmatic by nature, but out of my affection for you I have divulged them to you.’

[Padma Puran, Uttar Khand, Canto 281, verse nos. 30-48.]

Then Lord Shiva told Parvati that anyone who devotedly does Japa with these names, or remembers them, is liberated from the bad effects of countless sins that he may have committed in as many countless previous lives. And therefore he becomes eligible for obtaining emancipation and salvation.

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Section 2:

Anand Ramayan, Purva Kand, Canto 6, verse nos. 32-51

श्रीरामशतनामस्तोत्र

शम्भुरुवाच

राघवं करुणाकरं भवनाशनं दुरितापहम् । माधवं खगगामिनं जलरूपिणं परमेश्वरम् ॥ १ ॥

Line no. 1— राघवं (1) ‘Raaghavam’—Lord Sri Ram who took birth in the clan/dynasty of king Raghu (of Ayodhya).

करुणाकरं (2) ‘Karuṇakaram’—Lord Sri Ram is merciful and compassionate.

भवनाशनं (3) ‘Bhav-naashanam’—Lord Sri Ram destroys the world of delusions. [‘Bhav’ = the world of delusions; ‘Naashnam’ = one who destroys.]

दुरितापहम् । (4) ‘Duritaapaham’—Lord Sri Ram devours sins and evils swiftly, along with the torments and miseries created by them. [‘Durit’ = quickly; ‘Taap’ = torments created by sins.]

माधवं (5) ‘Maadhavam’—The Lord (Sri Ram) who is known as Maadhav. [‘Maadhav’ is an epithet for Lord Vishnu. It commemorates the slaying of the demon named Madhu by the Lord. The legend associated with this killing is that two demons named Madhu and Kaitav had tried to kill Brahma, the creator. Then Lord Vishnu had fought and killed them. This story appears in Devi-bhaagwat Puran, 1.4.9.]

खगगामिनं (6) ‘Khag-gaaminam’—The Lord (Sri Ram) who travels astride the bird (known as Garud—the legendary heron or eagle). [This refers to Lord Vishnu who rides on Garud. ‘Khag’ = bird; ‘Gaamin’ = to travel.]

जलरूपिणं (7) 'Jalrupinam'—The Lord (Sri Ram) who is established in the form of the water. [This implies that the life-giving water possesses this quality because the Lord is present in it in a subtle form. Left to its own account water is a gross element. But the fact that it harbours life and is the nectar of life is due to the subtle presence of the Supreme Being in it. The Lord imparts the water its life sustaining and fostering capabilities. 'Jal' = water; 'Rupinam' = in the form of.]

परमेश्वरम् (8) 'Parmeshwaram'—The Lord (Sri Ram) is the Supreme Lord. ['Param' = supreme; 'Ishwar' = Lord.] ॥ १ ॥

पालकं जनतारकं भवहारकं रिपुमारकम् । त्वां भजे जगदीश्वरं नररूपिणं रघुनन्दनम् ॥ २ ॥

Line no. 2— पालकं (9) 'Palakam'—The Lord (Sri Ram) is the sustainer, protector and nourisher of this creation.

जनतारकं (10) 'Jantaarakam'—The Lord (Sri Ram) provides liberation and deliverance to the living beings who are subjects of his creation. The Lord helps the creature to get across this ocean-like world of transmigration and delusions. ['Jan' = public, common man, subjects of a kingdom; 'Taarak' = one who takes across, one who gives freedom from bondage and the entangling web of this world.]

भवहारकं (11) 'Bhavahaarakam' —The Lord (Sri Ram) removes all the spiritual fetters or hurdles created by this world of delusions and transmigration of soul, a world which is like a web of birth and death along with their attendant troubles and miseries. ['Bhava' = the world of delusions and transmigration; 'Haarakam' = one who removes or eliminates.]

रिपुमारकम् । (12) 'Ripumaarkam'—(a) The Lord (Sri Ram) kills or crushes one's enemies. [Here meaning that the Lord Sri Ram removes all sources of torments, horrors and miseries that terrify his devotees or those who seek shelter with him. 'Ripu' = enemy; 'Maarakam' = one who kills.]

त्वां भजे जगदीश्वरं (13) 'Twaam Bhaje Jagdishwaram'—Oh Lord (Sri Ram), I worship, revere, adore, honour, pray and pay my obeisance to you who are the Lord God of the entire world (creation). ['Twam' = you; 'Bhaje' = worship, pray, adore, pay obeisance; 'Jagdishwar' = Lord of the world.]

नररूपिणं (14) 'Nar-rupinam'—The Lord (i.e. the Supreme Being known by the name of Sri Ram) is in the form of a human being. ['Nar' = man, human being; 'Rupinam' = in the form of.]

रघुनन्दनम् (15) 'Rahunandanam'—The Lord (Sri Ram) is born as a son in the race of kings belonging to the Raghu dynasty (of Ayodhya). ['Raghu' = an ancient of the kingdom of Ayodhya; 'Nandanam' = a son.] ॥ २ ॥

भूधवं वनमालिनं घनरूपिणं धरणीधरम् । श्रीहरिं त्रिगुणात्मकं तुलसीधवं मधुरस्वरम् ॥ ३ ॥

Line no. 3— भूधव (16) 'Bhudhavam'—He (Sri Ram) is the Lord (emperor; king) of the whole earth, and has sway over its realm. ['Bhu' = earth; 'Dhavam' = lord, owner.]

वनमालिनं (17) 'Vanmaalinam'—The Lord (Sri Ram) wears a garland of flowers that is called the Vanmaala. [The Vanmaala is a garland worn by Vishnu which is made of flowers of the wild forest (Van). The flowers are of a wide variety with those of the Kadamba tree (*Nauclea cadamba*) being in the center or the dominant ones. Sometimes, marigold, daisy or xanthium flowers are shown as being used in this garland.]

According to the Atharva Veda tradition's Gopal Uttar Tapini Upanishad, verse no. 40, the Vanmaala is a symbolic representation of the primary Maya (delusion creating powers of Brahm) which itself has no birth (because it is an integral part of Brahm which has no birth or beginning). This is why your (Brahma's) mental-born sons (such as Sankaadi) call 'Avidya' (ignorance having its genesis in Maya or delusions) a form of garland around my neck.

This world is revealed from the Viraat Purush, the primary and primordial form of Vishnu. This world is characterized by the dominance of ignorance that prevents the creature from being aware of the actual 'truth' of creation and his own 'self', thereby forcing him to remain trapped in this cycle of birth and death, and suffering from their accompanying horrors and agonies. This is due to the influence of Maya which acts like a millstone around the neck of the creature. Hence, the metaphor of the garland symbolizing Maya and Avidya around the neck of Vishnu is cited here because of the simple reason that the Viraat Purush has revealed himself as the creature, and Maya acts like a millstone that is worn like a garland around the neck of this creature.

The garland is also a metaphor for the stupendous responsibility that Lord Vishnu has as the care-taker, sustainer and protector of this creation created by Maya. This world is like a mill-stone around the Lord's neck, a bridle or a throat-latch which he carries with pleasure and without complaining at all.

Since the world is such a beautiful and enchanting place for the reason that it is created by Maya, this garland is also depicted as being bewitchingly beautiful just like the fascinating world it has managed to create.

This world is created by Maya, the power of the Lord to conjure up an extremely fascinating world from nothing, something which is not the reality, and is therefore deluding for those who think it to be real. The magic is that the Lord manages to maintain a fine balance between the two—he helps the Maya to perpetrate this creation, and at the same time keeps tight leash on its vagaries.

The garland is like an honour bestowed upon the Lord to mark the fact that the Lord has most expertly, avidly, diligently and wisely taken good care of the world with all its diversities and incongruities created by Maya, without ever complaining or failing in his duties, but miraculously remaining free from the effects of delusions that this Maya creates in this world.

From the perspective of the creature, if he falls in the trap of the attractions of the fascinating world around him, a world created by Maya, he wears this symbolic garland of Maya around his own neck that would act as a heavy burden on his chest. On the other hand, if he is wise and erudite to remain detached from the world in spite of doing his assigned duties diligently, he would be like Lord Vishnu himself. The former type of creature is trapped in this world of delusions, while the latter type is said to be spiritually liberated and delivered.]

घनरूपिणं (18) 'Ghan-rupinam'—(a) The Lord (Sri Ram) is a personified form or a treasury of all the greatest of virtues and glories. (b) The Lord (Sri Ram) has a form that is dark as the rain-bearing cloud. ['Ghan' = dense, concentrated, treasury; rain-bearing dark clouds; 'Rupinam' = having a form like it.]

धरणीधरम् । (19) 'Dharnidharam'—The Lord (Sri Ram) is the one who bears the burden of the earth; the Lord supports, protects and nourishes the earth and the entire gamut of life on it and inside it. ['Dharni' = earth; 'Dharanam' = one who holds.]

श्रीहरिं (20) 'Sri-Harim'—The Lord (Sri Ram) is none else but Lord Vishnu who is known as Sri Hari. [This is because the word 'Sri' refers to goddess Laxmi, the patron goddess of wealth and prosperity, who is the divine consort of Lord Vishnu, and the word 'Hari' relates to Lord Vishnu himself. The Lord is called 'Hari' because he literally steals or removes or snatches all the miseries, grief, pain, troubles and misfortunes of his devotees and followers, and makes them happy and free from worries.]

Another interpretation of the term 'Sri-Harim' is that Lord Ram has all the majesty, magnificence and glory that exist in this creation as the Supreme Lord of this world. At the same time, Lord Ram removes all the pain, misfortunes, miseries and grief of his devotees.]

त्रिगुणात्मकं (21) 'Trigunaatmakam'—The Lord (Sri Ram) embodies all the three Gunas in this creation. [The three Gunas are Sata Guna, Raja Guna and Tama Guna. These 'Gunas' are the inherent qualities and virtues that are present in all the living beings in this creation, and they determine the character and nature of all individuals. Since this entire creation is a revelation of the same Supreme Being, since everything that exists has its origin in the Supreme Being, and since the Supreme Being pervades uniformly throughout this creation—it follows that these three Gunas are also a part of the Supreme Being known as Lord Sri Ram. It is through these three Gunas that the Supreme Being controls the functioning of the entire world.]

तुलसीधवं (22) 'Tulsidhavam'—He (Sri Ram) is the Lord (husband) of Tulsi. [It is the holy Basil plant which is regarded as very sacred by the followers of Lord Vishnu (i.e. the Vishnu cult called the Vaishnavs). Its botanical name is *Ocimum sanctum*. It is said to have been born out of the tears of bliss and happiness of Lord Vishnu at the time when the pitcher containing the Amrit, the ambrosia of bliss and eternity, had emerged from the ocean when the latter was churned by the gods and the demons. The leaves of this plant are used to sanctify food offered to Lord Vishnu, and the dried wood of the tree is used for fire sacrifices, during cremation rites and also for making beads of the prayer rosary. In a personified form, Tulsi is regarded as a goddess very dear to Vishnu.]

According to another legend, there was a demon named Jaalandhar who had a chaste wife named Brindaa. Lord Shiva had tried his best to kill him but failed due to the spiritual powers of his wife Brindaa. At that time Lord Vishnu had broken her vows of chastity by stratagem, and when Brindaa came to know about it she cursed Vishnu that he would become a stone. Vishnu accepted the curse with respect because he knew that Brindaa was immaculate and was not at fault, but it was necessary to violate her vows so that her cruel demon husband could be killed. So instead of counter-cursing or showing his wrath, Vishnu blessed her and said that even in his form as a stone he would still have the greatest of respect for her and keep her over his head as a token of this. Vishnu thus became a stone known as 'Shaligraam' and Brindaa became the Tulsi plant whose leaves are always placed on the top of the Shaligraam to worship the Lord.

According to the Shiv Puran, Rudra Sanhita, Khanda 5 (Uddha Khanda), Cantos 36-40, there was a demon named Shankha-chud, and his chaste wife was called Tulsi. Lord Shiva as well as the great goddess of death Mahakaali had tried their best to slay this demon, but were unsuccessful. It was then that Lord Vishnu had made Tulsi fall from grace by some trick so that ultimately Shiva, as Rudra, was able to kill him. When Tulsi came to know about the trick played upon her by Vishnu, she cursed him to become a stone. Lord Shiva counter-cursed her that she would become a river known as 'Gandaki'. But Lord Vishnu intervened and forgave her, and said that he willingly accepts her curse as well as her as his symbolic consort. So it happened that Vishnu became a stone known as 'Shaaligram' that is found in this river, and Tulsi became a tree that grew on its bank. The leaves of this 'Tulsi' tree is regarded as the only thing that is acceptable to Lord Shaaligram—a metaphoric way of saying that Lord Vishnu can only be pleased by the touch of Tulsi.]

मधुस्वरम् (23) 'Madhu-swaram'—The Lord (Sri Ram) has a sweet and pleasant voice and speech. He talks pleasantly and courteously. ['Madhu' = sweet; 'Swaram' = tone of voice.] ॥ ३ ॥

श्रीकरं शरणप्रदं मधुमारकं व्रजपालकम् । त्वां भजे जगदीश्वरं नररूपिणं रघुनन्दनम् ॥ ४ ॥

Line no. 4— श्रीकरं (24) 'Srikaram'—The Lord (Sri Ram) is the one who provides or creates 'Sri'—i.e. he is the Lord who bestows all prosperity and successes, as well as all the majesty, grand virtues and magnificent glories that are obtainable in this world. ['Sri' = worldly achievements, glory, majesty, prosperity and welfare; 'Karam' = one who does something or brings about some happening.]

शरणप्रदं (25) 'Sharan-pradam'—The Lord (Sri Ram) gives or grants refuge and shelter as well as protection to all those who seek it in his holy feet. ['Sharan' = to seek shelter in holy feet; 'Pradam' = to grant or give.]

मधुमारकं (26) 'Madhu-marakam'—The Lord (Sri Ram) had killed the demon named Madhu. [The legend associated with this killing is that two demons named Madhu and Kaitav had tried to kill Brahma, the creator. Then Lord Vishnu had fought and killed them. This story appears in Devi-bhaagwat Puran, 1.4.9. 'Madhu' = name of a demon; 'Marakam' = one who killed.]

व्रजपालकम् । (27) 'Vraj-palakam'—The Lord (Sri Ram) had protected and taken care of the residents of Vraj (Brindaavan). [This refer to Lord Vishnu's incarnation as Lord Krishna. The Lord had protected the residents of Brindaavan against the tyranny of Kansha. 'Vraj' = the place where Lord Krishna spent his childhood days; 'Palakam' = the one who protects and sustains.]

त्वां भजे जगदीश्वरं नररूपिणं रघुनन्दनम् 'Twam Bhaje Jadishwaram Nar-rupinam Raghunandanam'—I worship you, oh Lord (Sri Ram), who are the Lord of the world, is in the form of a human being, and are born in the race of kings belonging to the Raghu dynasty. [Refer line no. 2.] ॥ ४ ॥

विठ्ठलं मथुरास्थितं रजकान्तकं गजमारकम् । सञ्चुतं बकमारकं वृषघातकं तुरगार्दनम् ॥ ५ ॥

Line no. 5— विठ्ठलं (28) ‘Vitthalam’—The Lord (Sri Ram) is also known as Vitthal. [Lord Vitthal, also known as Panduranga, is a form of Lord Vishnu that is worshipped in the south of India, especially in the south-western state of Maharashtra in a district known as Sholapur. This idol has its chief seat in a town by the name of Pandharapur. It is situated in the confluence of the two rivers Bhima and Chandrabhaga.

The image is depicted as standing on a brick, with the hands on the waist.

The legend associated with this form of the Lord is briefly as follows—Long age, in a small village named Lohadandapur, a son was born to a Brahmin family. He was brought up well and married to a lovely and cultured girl, but was wayward in his behaviour. In order to constant reprimands from his parents, he separated from them and went away with his wife. Heartbroken, the parents decided to go on a pilgrim to Varanasi, the worldly abode of Lord Shiva. Hearing this, Pundalika Vitthal also decided to go to Varanasi. He hired a horse and traveled in comfort. En-route, he met his aged parents trudging on foot, but he ignored them.

It so happened that on the way he came to a hermitage of sage Kukkuta, and asked him the way to Varanasi. The sage neglected him. Pundalike was annoyed, and wandered around the hermitage when he saw three unkempt women entering the place and cleaning it with their open hairs. When they came out, they were transformed into well-groomed and radiant women. Awe-struck at this wonder, Pundalika asked them for an explanation. They said that they were personified forms of the three holy rivers, Ganges, Yamuna and Saraswati. They are constantly being polluted by sinful people taking a dip in them, and therefore once in a while they come here to get their purity restored. Asked how the sage gets this mystical power, the three women replied that it is because the sage serves his old parents with great devotion.

A thunderbolt literally struck Pundalika. He went in and prostrated before sage Kukkuta, and retraced his step to where his old parents were trudging towards Varanasi. Pundalika spent the rest of the years serving his parents with the greatest of love and devotion, taking them to pilgrim places and taking care of their needs with the greatest of diligence.

Lord Narayan (Vishnu) was very pleased with his devotion for his parents, and one day he decided to visit his home to see personally how he serves his parents. When the Lord came, Pundalika was busy serving his parents, and he did not pay much attention to the Lord except to gesture him to be seated on a slab of stone. The Lord however was extremely pleased, and he watched in fascination how Pundalika was going about his duties. The Lord was smiling, and his hands were on his waist as he watched.

It is believed that Lord Narayan was so transfixed with this show of love by Pundalika that he became meditative, and forever became immobile—like a ‘stone’. Since the Lord had manifested himself because of Pundalika, the latter’s name was added to the name of Lord Narayan.

The word ‘Panduranga’ in Marathi means ‘white’ though Lord Vishnu is known to have a dark complexion like that of a rain-bearing cloud or that of the sky, as also the fact that the image is also made of dark black stone. The reason is that ‘white’ is a colour of purity and holiness, as well as that of Sata Guna, the best of the three Gunas.

Another reason is that it is believed that earlier Lord Shiva was worshipped here, and since Shiva smears the ash of the fire sacrifice on his body because he is depicted as an ascetic, the complexion of his body is 'white' or grey like that of the ash.

The word 'Vit' in Marathi language spoken in that part of India means 'a brick', and 'Tthala' means 'to stand'. Therefore, the Lord who stands on a brick, and is immobile like a stone, is called 'Vitthal'.

Vitthal is also said to incorporate all the three gods of the Trinity—Brahma the creator who is represented by the word 'Vi' derived from 'Vidhi'—the god who decides destiny, 'Ttha' for Lord Shiva who is also known as *Neelkantha*, the Lord with a blue-purple neck, and 'La' referring to Lord Vishnu who is the husband of *Laxmi*, the goddess of prosperity and wealth.

The combined name of this revelation of Lord Vishnu thus came to be known as 'Pandulika Vitthal'.

There is a legend behind the brick too. Earlier, when the king of gods, Indra, has killed the demon Vrittasur with his weapon known as Vajra, the demon cursed him to become a stone. Indra rushed to Lord Vishnu to do something to save him. The Lord told him that the curse cannot be avoided, but Indra should go to Pandharpur and become a brick there till the time the Lord would come personally to provide him liberation from this curse by the touch of the dust of his holy feet. It was the same brick that Pundalika had offered to Lord Narayan to be seated. Thus, with the touch of Lord Vishnu's holy feet, Indra was freed from his curse.

Now a question arises, why this form of the Lord is called 'Panduranga' which means white.]

मथुरास्थितं (29) 'Mathura-sthitam'—The Lord (Sri Ram) is established in Mathura. [Mathura is a holy place like Ayodhya where Lord Krishna, the incarnation of Vishnu in the Dwapar Yug (era) that followed that of Lord Ram in the Treta Yug, did his worldly deeds. This holy name shows that both Lord Krishna and Lord Ram are the same, only they were born in different eras. 'Mathura' = a city associated with Lord Krishna; 'Sthitham' = to be established in.]

रजकान्तकं (30) 'Rajkaantakam'—(a) The Lord (Sri Ram) is the slayer of the haughty Rajak (in his incarnation as Lord Krishna). [The story of Rajak is related to Lord Krishna, and it appears in Vishnu Puran, Khanda or Ansha no. 5, Canto no. 19, verse nos. 14-17. It says that when Lord Krishna went to Mathura on the invitation of Kansha, its cruel ruler, the Lord met Rajak. The latter was very haughty because of his friendliness with Kansha. By profession he used to colour clothes. When Lord Krishna and his elder brother Balraam asked Rajak for clothes that were coloured blue and yellow, Rajak rebuked them and said many unwarranted things. The Lord became infuriated and hit him hard with his open palms. This resulted in breaking Rajak's head from his neck, and he died. The Lord then snatched two pieces of cloth, one coloured blue and the other yellow, from him. Baalram wore the blue coloured cloth and Lord Krishna the yellow one. 'Rajak' = the name of a person who was very haughty and dear of Kansha, the cruel ruler of Mathura; 'Antakaam' = one who brings about an end.]

(b) The Lord (Sri Ram) is as glorious, splendourous, brilliant and shining as the brilliant white colour of silver. That is, the Lord possesses all the best of virtues, and is most holy and pure because the colour 'white' is a representative colour of these grand and noble qualities. ['Rajat' = silver; 'Kaanta' = radiance (as white as silver).]

(c) The Lord (Sri Ram) is as splendourous and radiant as light; the Lord removes darkness with the light of his presence. The word 'light' here also means the illumination provided by knowledge, erudition, wisdom and enlightenment which removes the darkness of ignorance and delusions. ['Raja' = light, illumination; 'Kaantakam' = one who does or provides something, or brings into effect.]

गजमारकम् । (31) 'Gaja-maarakam'—The Lord (Sri Ram) had slayed the elephant known as Gaja (in his incarnation as Lord Krishna). ['Gaja' = the elephant; 'Marakam' = one who killed.]

This story relates to Lord Krishna. This event are narrated in great detail in Bhagvat Maha-puran, as well as in Vishnu Puran, Khand no. 5, Canto 20, verse nos. 22-23, 30-44.

Lord Krishna and his elder brother Balraam had killed a wild and intoxicated elephant known as Kuvalyaapid especially sent by Kansha to kill Krishna and his brother Balraam when the two brothers were coming to attend the ceremony of the bow to be held at the royal pavilion of Kansha, the cruel and tyrannical ruler of Mathura. The Lord had, however, broken this bow earlier (verse nos. 15-17).

This elephant had the strength of Erawat, the royal elephant of Indra, the king of gods. It was standing guard at the gate of the royal pavilion, and it attacked the Lord as he came to the gate. Krishna yanked its left tusk with his right hand, and used it to shatter the head of its tamer, the Mahout. Meanwhile, Balraam broke the elephant's right tusk and used it as a battering ram to kill other Mahouts standing nearby. Finally, Balraam jumped and kicked the elephant viciously on its head, thereby killing it on the spot.]

सन्नुतं (32) 'Sannutam'—The Lord (Sri Ram) is praised, revered, adored, worshipped and honoured by those who are exalted, honourable and high. The Lord possesses the best of virtues and glories. The Lord is most exalted, the best and supreme. ['Uttam' = best; 'Sannutam' = to have qualities that are best, to be exalted and high.]

बकमारकं (33) 'Bakamaarkam'—The Lord (Sri Ram) had killed the Bak. [The term 'Bak' has two meanings—one is a demon named Bakaasur, and the other is demon in the form of a crane. The word 'Maarakam' means the killer of this demon.]

The story associated with this demon is briefly as follows—(a) Bakaasur was a demon who lived near the small town of Ekacakranagar. He used to kill the residents of this town. So they reached an agreement with him that one human being would voluntarily go to him with other eatables, but the demons should not kill at random. When the Pandavas came to live here during their forest exile, they came to know of this curse, and Bhima, the strongest of the Pandava brothers, killed this demon. This rid the town of its menace. This story is narrated in Mahabharata, Aadiparva, 163.

(b) The demon Bak in the form of a crane—this story is mentioned in Bhagvata Maha Puran, Skanda 10, Canto 11, verse nos. 46-51. He was killed by Lord Krishna. It so happened that one day Lord Krishna, his brother Balraam and other companions had gone to a large water body to quench the their own thirst as well as of their cows and calves. When they were in the process of drinking water, a great demon named Bakaasur, who lived in the water as a huge crane, immediately lunged forward and gulped down Krishna. When the Lord entered the demon's mouth, he began to scorch his palate and inner throat as if they were on fire. The demon became terrified and vomited Krishna out, but rushed forward to kill him. Then Lord Krishna caught hold of the demons beaks and tore it apart just like one tears a reed into two pieces.]

वृषघातकं (34) 'Vrish-ghaatakam'—The Lord (Sri Ram) had killed the demon named Vrish or Vrish-bhaasur (in his incarnation as Lord Krishna). ['Vrish' = a bison; 'Ghaatakam' = a killer; the Lord who killed this demon.]

Vrishbhaasur, the bison-shaped demon, was killed by Lord Krishna. This story is mentioned in Vishnu Puran, Khand or Ansha 5, Canto 14, verse nos. 1-14. This demon was in the form of a wild bison who had once come to Vrindavan, causing terror amongst the humble cowherd community. They appealed to Lord Krishna. The Lord challenged him, yelling and clapping loudly to divert the demon's attention towards himself. The bison rushed towards Krishna, pointing his horns at the Lord. Krishna stood like a rock, and caught hold of the demon by the horns and punched him in his abdomen with his bent knee. Then Krishna twisted and turned around the demon's neck as one wrings a piece of wet cloth to squeeze out the water from it. Then, the Lord yanked out a horn and attacked the demon with it. The demon vomited blood and died instantly.]

तुर्गादनम् (35) 'Turgaadanam'—The Lord (Sri Ram) who had killed the demon named Turga (a donkey). ['Turga' = a demon in the form of a horse or a donkey; 'Danam' = to vanquish; to subdue, to trounce.]

Dhenukaasur or Turgaasur—The word 'Dhenu' or 'Turga' mean a donkey or a horse. Hence, this demon (Asur) was in the form of wild donkey or a horse. Lord Krishna had killed him. This story is narrated in Bhagvat Maha Puran, Skandha 10, Canto 15, verse nos. 20-40, and Vishnu Puran, Khanda or Ansha 5, Canto 8, verse nos. 1-13. Briefly it says that there was a forest of rich coconut trees. A demon in the form of a donkey or a horse lived in it. He used to destroy the fruits and create unnecessary havoc in this forest. Once, Lord Krishna and his elder brother Balraam came there. The two brothers wished to eat the ripe fruits of the coconut trees, and so Balraam fell some of them. The demon heard the sound and charged at them. He kicked Balraam with his two hind legs on his chest. Balraam caught hold of the demon with these legs and swung him around. Then he dashed him on a sturdy coconut tree, thereby killing him. All other companions of this demon who came to help him met the same fate.] ॥ ५ ॥

नन्दजं वसुदेवजं बलियज्ञं सुरपालकम् । त्वां भजे जगदीश्वरं नररूपिणं रघुनन्दनम् ॥ ६ ॥

Line no. 6—नन्दजं (36) 'Nandajam'—The Lord (Sri Ram) who became the son of Nanda. [This refers to Lord Vishnu's incarnation as Lord Krishna. Addressing Lord Ram as Lord Krishna is to establish uniformity between these two incarnations of Lord Vishnu. The story goes that after Lord Krishna was born to Devki inside the cell of a prison of Kansha, the cruel ruler of Mathura, his worldly father, Vasudev, had taken the infant Krishna and gave him to Nanda who was the chief of the cowherd community of Gokul in Vrindavan. His wife was Yashoda who brought up Lord Krishna as her own son. This story is narrated in Bhagvat Maha Puran, Skanda 10, Canto 3, verse nos. 47-54, and in Canto 5, verse no. 23-27, as well as in Vishnu Puran, Khanda or Ansha 5, Canto 3, verse nos. 1-23. 'Nanda' = the name of the chief of the cowherd community of Vrindavan; 'Nandan' = a son.]

वसुदेवजं (37) 'Vasudevajam'—The Lord (Sri Ram) who was born as the son of Vasudeo. [This refers to Lord Vishnu's incarnation as Lord Krishna. Addressing Lord Ram as Lord

Krishna is to establish uniformity between these two incarnations of Lord Vishnu. Vasudeo was married to Devaki, the sister of Kansha who was the tyrannical ruler of Mathura. Vasudeo and Devaki had prayed to Lord Vishnu in an earlier life that they want to have the Lord as their son. So Lord Vishnu incarnated as Lord Krishna to become the son of the couple. But as it happened, Kansha was cursed that the eighth son of Devaki would be his killer, so he threw them in jail and started killing all the children born to the couple. It was in this prison cell that Krishna revealed himself to the couple. ‘Vasudeo’ was the son of king Shur of Mathura, and he was married to Devaki, the sister of Kansha who was the son of Ugrasen of the Bhoj dynasty. This story is narrated in Bhagvat Maha Puran, Skanda 10, Canto 1 to 3; and in Vishnu Puran, Khanda or Ansha 5, Cantos 1 to 3.] बलियज्ञं (38) ‘Bali-yagya-gam’—The Lord (Sri Ram) who had gone to attend the fire sacrifice of king Bali. [This refers to Lord Vaaman who was an incarnation of Lord Vishnu as a dwarf mendicant. He had gone to attend the fire sacrifice held by Bali, and had measured the entire creation in his two steps, while the third was placed on Bali’s head, thereby subduing him. This name again establishes that all the incarnations of Lord Vishnu have the same importance and significance. ‘Bali’ = a great king who was renowned for his charities; ‘Yagya’ = fire sacrifice; ‘Gam’ = to go.]

The legend of this incarnation is briefly as follows— This is the fifth incarnation of Vishnu. When Bali, the grandson of Prahalad for whom Vishnu had incarnated as Nrisingh, conquered the entire world and deprived Indra, the king of Gods who ruled over the heavens, Vishnu had taken the dwarfish form of a Brahmin mendicant to retrieve the heaven for Indra when he was requested by Aditi, the mother of Gods, to do so. He approached Bali, who was famous for his charities, as a ‘Vaaman’ or a dwarf, and begged him for ground sufficient enough to be covered by his three small steps. When the unsuspecting Bali agreed, Vaaman measured the entire earth with one step, the heaven with the second step, and for the third step he measured Bali’s own head symbolizing the crown of the kingdom of Bali. He put his third step on Bali’s head and pushed the latter to the nether world. Hence, Vishnu is also called ‘Trivikram’—one who conquered the three worlds in three steps. But the Lord is so kind and gracious that he saw the injustice done to a magnanimous Bali who had been righteous and firm in his vow of making charity, and never rescinded on his commitments. So, the Lord made him the king of the nether world, and himself took up the job of protecting him there as his gatekeeper. This incarnation of Lord Vishnu is his fifth and followed the Nrisingh form which was the fourth. The idea behind this Vaaman incarnation is that even the most humble looking man, represented by the diminutive Vaaman in this story, can indeed have the stupendous power of the Spirit that even the most powerful gods and kings lack.]

सुरपालकम् । (39) ‘Surpaalakam’—The Lord (Sri Ram) is the sustainer, protector and well-wisher of the Gods. [‘Sur’ = gods; ‘Palakam’ = one who sustains and protects.]

त्वां भजे जगदीश्वरं नररूपिणं रघुनन्दनम्--‘Twam Bhaje Jadishwaram Nar-rupinam Raghunandanam’—I worship you, oh Lord (Sri Ram), who are the Lord of the world, is in the form of a human being, and are born in the race of kings belonging to the Raghu dynasty. [Refer line no. 4.] ॥ ६ ॥

केशवं कपिवेष्टितं कपिमारकं मृगमर्दिनम् । सुन्दरं द्विजपालकं दितिजार्दनं दनुजार्दनम् ॥ ७ ॥

Line no. 7— केशवं (40) ‘Keshavam’—The Lord (Sri Ram) is also known as Keshav. [This name is used for Lord Vishnu as well as for Lord Krishna. The use of this name for Lord Ram implies that there is no difference between the two forms of Lord Vishnu as Ram and Krishna. The Tripadvibhūt Maha Narayan Upanishad of the Atharva Veda, Canto 7, paragraph no. 18 says that Keshav, or Lord Vishnu, has twenty-four Vyūhas or forms. These 24 forms are the different incarnations, called the ‘Avtaars’, of Lord Vishnu. There are said to be ten chief ones and fourteen minor ones. The ten main ones = Matsya (Fish), Kurma (Tortoise), Varāaha (Boar), Nrisingh (half man and half lion), Vāmaan (Dwarf), Balraam, Ram, Krishna, Buddha, Kalki. The fourteen minor ones = such as sage Sankaadi, Kapil, Narad, Veda Vyas, Dattatreya, Nar-Narayan, Rishavdeo, King Prithu, Dhanvantri, Mohini, Hayagriva, Hans, Yagya or fire sacrifice, and Hari who blessed the child devotee Dhruv = total 24 Avtaars.]

कपिवेष्टितं (41) ‘Kapiveshtitam’—The Lord (Sri Ram) was surrounded by the monkeys. [The monkey army had surrounded the Lord from all sides throughout the Lanka campaign. ‘Kapi’ = monkeys; ‘Aaveshtita’ = to surround, to cover.]

कपिमारकं (42) ‘Kapi-maarakam’—The Lord (Sri Ram) who had killed the monkey (named Vaali, the elder brother of Sugriv). [Vaali was the elder brother of Sugriv and the king of the monkey race. He had thrashed his younger brother Sugriv due to some misunderstanding and threw him out of the kingdom, thereby usurping his share and right to the throne of Kishkindha, the capital of the kingdom of monkeys. Not only this, Vaali had also kept Sugriv’s lawful wife as his mistress, a deed which is totally unethical. Lord Ram had slayed Vaali when Sugriv complained of the injustice that was done to him by his own brother.]

मृगमर्दिनम् । (43) ‘Mrig-mardinam’—The Lord (Sri Ram) had killed the deer. [This relates to the slaying of the demon Marich who was forced by the demon king Ravana to become a decoy golden deer so that he could steal Sita from the forest hermitage of Lord Ram. Ravana was instigated by his sister Supernakha who was earlier deformed by Lord Ram by getting her nose and ears cut when she tried to lure the Lord with her lascivious gestures. This stealing of Sita set the stage for the grand war of Lanka when the whole of the evil demon race was annihilated by Lord Ram so that Sita could be rescued from Ravana’s clutches. ‘Mrig’ = deer; ‘Mardinam’ = one who killed.]

सुन्दरं (44) ‘Sundaram’—The Lord (Sri Ram) is beautiful and enchanting. [‘Sundar’ = beautiful. The word does not only mean physical beauty but also beauty of the eclectic virtues, noble character and superior knowledge that the Lord exemplified. Everything about the Lord was beautiful and magnificent and most charming.]

द्विजपालकं (45) ‘Dwijpaalakam’—The Lord (Sri Ram) is a sustainer, protector, care-taker and well-wisher of the Brahmins (the learned and the upper class in the society). [‘Dwij’ = a Brhahmin; ‘Paalakam’ = one who takes care of someone else.]

दितिजार्दनं (46) ‘Diti-jaardanam’—The Lord (Sri Ram) is the killer and eliminator, or the crusher and vanquisher of the demons and other evil creatures who are the sons of Diti. [‘Diti’ = the mother of demons; ‘Jaardanam’ = the one who kills, vanquishes, crushes or subdues the sons of Diti.]

दनुजार्दनम् (47) ‘Danujaadanam’—The Lord (Sri Ram) is the killer of demons. [‘Danuj’ = demons; ‘Jaardanam’ = the one who kills, vanquishes, crushes or subdues them.] ॥ ७ ॥

बालकं खरमर्दिनं ऋषिपूजितं मुनिचिन्तितम् । त्वां भजे जगदीश्वरं नररूपिणं रघुनन्दनम् ॥ ८ ॥

Line no. 8— बालकं (48) ‘Baalakam’—The Lord (Sri Ram) had taken the form of a child when he revealed himself as a human being. [This refers to the birth of Lord Vishnu as Ram in the household of king Dasrath and queen Kaushalya of Ayodhya. ‘Baalak’ = a child.]

खरमर्दिनं (49) ‘Khar-mardinam’—The Lord (Sri Ram) had killed the demon named Khar. [‘Khar’ = a demon by this name; ‘Mardinam’ = a slayer or killer of.]

ऋषिपूजितं (50) ‘Rishi-poojitam’—The Lord (Sri Ram) had been worshipped, adored and honoured by the Rishis. [‘Rishi’ = sages and seers; ‘Poojitam’ = worshipped by.]

मुनिचिन्तितम् । (51) ‘Muni-chintitam’—The Lord (Sri Ram) was the subject of regular contemplation, meditation and remembrance by the Munis. [‘Muni’ = sages and hermits; ‘Chintitam’ = constantly remembered by.]

त्वां भजे जगदीश्वरं नररूपिणं रघुनन्दनम्-- ‘Twam Bhaje Jadishwaram Nar-rupinam Raghunandanam’—I worship you, oh Lord (Sri Ram), who are the Lord of the world, is in the form of a human being, and are born in the race of kings belonging to the Raghu dynasty. [Refer line no. 6.] ॥ ८ ॥

शंकरं जलशायिनं कुशबालकं रथवाहनम् । सरयूनतं प्रियपुष्पकं प्रियभूसुरं लवबालकम् ॥ ९ ॥

Line no. 9— शंकरं (52) ‘Shankaram’—The Lord (Sri Ram) is known as ‘Shankar’—one who is truthful, beautiful, wise, enlightened, auspicious, holy and divine. [‘Shankar’ is a term usually used to mean Lord Shiva, but it is also an epithet that covers these virtues and characters. Therefore it is both a proper noun as well as an adjective.]

जलशायिनं (53) ‘Jalshaa-yinam’—The Lord (Sri Ram) sleeps on the water. [This refers to Lord Vishnu’s cosmic form that is depicted in the Purans, the ancient texts, as lying reclining on a bed made of the coiled body of the celestial serpent known as Seshnath who floats on the surface of Kshirsagar, the celestial ocean of milk. ‘Jal’ = water; ‘Shaa-yinam’ = one who sleeps on.]

कुशबालकं (54) ‘Kush-baalakam’—The Lord (Sri Ram) had a son named Kush. [Kush was the elder son of Lord Ram, and he was born to Sita, the Lord’s divine consort, in the hermitage of sage Valmiki. His younger brother was named Lav. ‘Kush’ = name of Ram’s son; ‘Baalakam’ = a child.]

रथवाहनम् । (55) ‘Rath-vaahanam’—The Lord (Sri Ram) who rides on a chariot. [‘Rath’ = a chariot; ‘Vaahan’ = a vehicle.]

सरयूनतं (56) ‘Saryu-natam’—The Lord (Sri Ram) is shown respect by the holy river Saryu who bows before him. [‘Saryu’ = the name of a river that flows north of Ayodhya; ‘Natam’ = to bow before.]

प्रियपुष्पकं (57) ‘Priya-pushpakam’—The Lord (Sri Ram) is dear to Pushpak (the celestial vehicle of Kuber, the treasurer of the Gods). [The story goes that the demon Ravana had defeated Kuber and captured the treasury of the Gods. He had kept this plane, named

Pushpak, in his captivity. When Lord Ram won the war and killed Ravana, it was this plane that the Lord used to come back to Ayodhya. Then the Lord allowed Pushpak to go back to the heaven, thereby freeing it from its bondage. It ought to be remembered here that in ancient Hindu mythology, even such inanimate objects as the air-plane known as Pushpak are depicted in a personified form. The reason is that anything that lives in the heaven is supposed to be divine and holy, and therefore immortal as compared to the mortal creatures of this world on earth.

Since the Lord had provided the Pushpak its freedom, he became dear to the latter. ‘Priya’ = dear; ‘Pushpakam’ = the air-plane of Kuber that was held captive by Ravana.]

प्रियभूसुरं (58) ‘Priya-bhusuram’—The Lord (Sri Ram) is dear to the ‘Bhusurs’, the gods or the lords of the earth. [This term ‘Bhusur’ refers to the Brahmin class which is regarded as the most exalted amongst the human race. They are honoured as being equivalent to the Gods in the heaven. ‘Priya’ = dear; ‘Bhu’ = earth; ‘Sur’ = the gods.]

लवबालकम् (59) ‘Lav-baalakam’—The Lord (Sri Ram) had a child (son) named Lav. [Lav was the younger brother of Kush. ‘Lav’ = the name of the second son of Ram; ‘Baalakam’ = a child.] ॥ ९ ॥

श्रीधरं मधुसूदनं भरताग्रजं गरुडध्वजम् । त्वां भजे जगदीश्वरं नररूपिणं रघुनन्दनम् ॥ १० ॥

Line no. 10— श्रीधरं (59) ‘Sri-dharam’—The Lord (Sri Ram) literally bears or holds Sri (Laxmi, the patron goddess of prosperity and well-being, and the divine consort of Vishnu) on his chest or bosom. That is, Sri or goddess Laxmi is very dear to the cosmic Lord known as Vishnu. [‘Sri’ = Laxmi; ‘Dharam’ = to place, to establish, to put.]

मधुसूदनं (60) ‘Madhu-sudanam’—The Lord (Sri Ram) is the killer of the demon Madhu. [This refers to Lord Vishnu killing the demon named Madhu along with another demon named Kaitav. Therefore the Lord is known as Maadhav as well as Madhusudan. See line no. 1, name no. 5. ‘Madhu’ = the name of a demon; ‘Sudanam’ = the killer or slayer.]

भरताग्रजं (61) ‘Bharataa-grajam’—The Lord (Sri Ram) is the elder brother of Bharat. [Lord Ram were four brothers—Ram, Bharat, Laxman and Shatrughan. Ram was the eldest, followed by Bharat, Laxman and Shatrughan who was the youngest. ‘Bharat’ = the younger brother of Ram; ‘Agraj’ = elder brother.]

गरुडध्वजम् । (62) ‘Garud-dhwajam’—The Lord (Sri Ram) has Garud sitting on his flag, or the royal flag of the Lord has the sign of Garud marked on it. [This clearly refers to Lord Vishnu whose mount is Garud, the celestial heron or eagle. Lord Vishnu’s flag has the form—a sign— of Garud embroidered on it, much like a sign that the flags of kings and emperors have that are exclusive to them and help to identify them. Garud is also shown as sitting on the Lord’s flag. Garud is also the vehicle of Lord Vishnu, and is regarded as swift as the mind in its movement—i.e. it can go anywhere at will in the shortest time possible. ‘Garud’ = the mount of Vishnu; ‘Dhwaj’ = flag.]

त्वां भजे जगदीश्वरं नररूपिणं रघुनन्दनम्-- ‘Twam Bhaje Jadishwaram Nar-rupinam Raghunandanam’—I worship you, oh Lord (Sri Ram), who are the Lord of the world, is in the form of a human being, and are born in the race of kings belonging to the Raghu dynasty. [Refer line no. 8.] ॥ १० ॥

गोप्रियं गुरुपुत्रदं वदतां वरं करुणानिधिम् । भक्तपं जनतोषदं सुरपूजितं श्रुतिभिः स्तुतम् ॥ ११ ॥

Line no. 11— गोप्रियं (63) ‘Gopriyam’—The Lord (Sri Ram) was dear to the cows, or he loved the cows (in his incarnation as Lord Krishna). [Once again, as often in this hymn, Lord Ram and Lord Krishna are treated as one, because these two incarnations were the only two main forms that Lord Vishnu had taken as a human. ‘Go’ = cow in Sanskrit or Hindi; ‘Priyam’ = to be dear of.]

गुरुपुत्रदं (64) ‘Guru-putradam’—The Lord (Sri Ram) had given his Guru (teacher) his son back. [This again relates to Lord Vishnu’s incarnation as Lord Krishna. The Lord was taught by Saandipani. When the education was complete, the Lord asked his Guru to ask for anything as a gift in return for giving his knowledge. The teacher was learned, and he did not want anything in return, but his wife requested Krishna that if he is really interested in giving some sort of gift then he should bring their dead son back to them. So Krishna went to the nether world but could not find their son. Then he went to the heaven and found him in the custody of Yam, the god of death. Krishna then brought the son and gave him to his teacher Saandipani. This incident is narrated in Srimad Bhagwat Puran, Skandha 10, Purvaardha, Canto 45, verse nos. 31-48. ‘Guru’ = a teacher; ‘Putra’ = a son; ‘Dam’ = to give.]

वदतां वरं (65) ‘Vadataam Varam’—The Lord (Sri Ram) is the greatest giver of boons and the best speaker or orator. [‘Vadataam’ = a speaker; ‘Varam’ = the senior most; a boon.]

करुणानिधिम् । (66) ‘Karunaa-nidhim’—The Lord (Sri Ram) is a treasury of mercy, compassion, benevolence and grace. [‘Karuna’= mercy, compassion; ‘Nidhi’ = a treasury, a source of something great.]

भक्तपं (67) ‘Bhaktapam’—The Lord (Sri Ram) is a protector of devotees. [‘Bhakta’ = devotee; ‘Tapam’ = miseries and torments.]

जनतोषदं (68) ‘Jantoshadam’—The Lord (Sri Ram) is the one who gives or grants contentedness and satisfaction to his subjects and dependants. [‘Jana’ = subjects, dependants; ‘Tosh’ = satisfaction, contentedness; ‘Danam’ = to give, grant.]

सुरपूजितं (69) ‘Sur-pujitam’—The Lord (Sri Ram) is worshipped, adored, honoured and respected by the Gods. [‘Sur’= gods; ‘Pujitam’ = is worshipped by.]

श्रुतिभिः स्तुतम् (70) ‘Srutibhi Stutam’—The Lord (Sri Ram) is lauded and honoured by the Vedas (the ancient scriptures. [‘Sruti’ = the Vedas; ‘Stutam’ = honoured and adored.] ॥

११ ॥

भुक्तिदं जनमुक्तिदं जनरञ्जनं नृपनन्दनम् । त्वां भजे जगदीश्वरं नररूपिणं रघुनन्दनम् ॥ १२ ॥

Line no. 12— भुक्तिदं (71) ‘Bhuktidam’—The Lord (Sri Ram) is a giver of all comforts and sufferings (according to the creature’s deeds). [Being the Supreme Lord of creation, it is he who decides the degree and extent of reward in the way of pleasures and comfort that a creature is eligible to get by the virtue of the good deeds done by it, or a punishment by the way of sufferings and pains for the evil deeds. ‘Bhukti’ = to suffer or enjoy; ‘Dam’ = a giver.]

जनमुक्तिदं (72) 'Janmuktidadam'—The Lord (Sri Ram) is a giver of Mukti (liberation and deliverance to the soul of the living being) to the living being who is the subject of the kingdom of the Lord. [Being the Supreme Lord of creation, he grants emancipation and salvation to the creature; it is the Lord who can provide the creature with freedom from the horrors of this world and its endless cycle of birth and death along with their attendant problems and torments. 'Jana' = subjects, followers, dependants; 'Mukti' = liberation and deliverance; 'Dam' = giver.]

जनरञ्जनं (73) 'Jana-ranjanam'—The Lord (Sri Ram) is a giver of happiness and joy to his subjects and followers. ['Jana' = subjects, followers, dependants; 'Ranjan' = happiness and joy.]

नृपनन्दनम् । (74) 'Nrip-nandanam'—The Lord (Sri Ram) became a son of the king (Dasrath of Ayodhya). [In his previous life, Dasrath was a king named Manu. He is regarded as the first male amongst the human race. He and his wife Satrupa had prayed to Lord Vishnu that they want the Lord as their son. It was this boon that resulted in Lord Vishnu, the Supreme Being, to become a son of Dasrath. In this incarnation, Vishnu was known as 'Ram'. 'Nrip' = king; 'Nandanam' = a son.]

त्वां भजे जगदीश्वरं नररूपिणं रघुनन्दनम्-- 'Twam Bhaje Jadishwaram Nar-rupinam Raghunandanam'—I worship you, oh Lord (Sri Ram), who are the Lord of the world, is in the form of a human being, and are born in the race of kings belonging to the Raghu dynasty. [Refer line no. 10.] ॥ १२ ॥

चिद्धनं चिरजीविनं मणिमालिनं वरदोन्मुखम् । श्रीधरं धृतिदायकं बलवर्धनं गतिदायकम् ॥ १३ ॥

Line no. 13— चिद्धनं (75) 'Chddhanam'—The Lord (Sri Ram) is pure cosmic Consciousness personified. ['Chidda' = consciousness; 'Dhanam' = a treasury, fount, source, dense.]

चिरजीविनं (76) 'Chir-jivanam'—The Lord (Sri Ram) is an eternal life; the Lord has an infinitely long life. ['Chir' = long-lasting, infinite, eternal, always; 'Jivanam' = life.]

मणिमालिनं (77) 'Mani-maalinaam'—The Lord (Sri Ram) wears a garland or a necklace of priceless gems. ['Mani' = gem; 'Maala' = garland or necklace.]

वरदोन्मुखम् । (78) 'Varandomukham'—The Lord (Sri Ram) is ever eager and ready to grant auspicious boons and gifts (to his followers and devotees who are righteous and holy). ['Var' = boons and grants; 'Unmukham' = ready, eager, inclined to do or give.]

श्रीधरं (79) 'Sridharam'—The Lord (Sri Ram) bears the sign of the Srivatsa on his chest. [This is the mark of the foot of sage Bhrigu which he had caste on the chest of Vishnu ones when he got annoyed upon the Lord. The Lord is so enamoured of his devotees that instead of taking umbrage at this disrespect shown by the sage and punishing him for his misdemeanor, he had blessed the sage that his footprint would always remain on his chest as one of the jewels worn by Lord Vishnu. However, Laxmi was so angry at the temerity of sage Brighu that she cursed that henceforth she, in the form of wealth and material abundance, would always shun a Brahmin; it is believed that this is the reason why Brahmins, who are otherwise of a high birth, are always serving others in the society who are junior to them by birth for their monetary needs. Refer Atharva Veda's Gopal Uttar

Tapini Upanishad, verse nos. 30 and 35. 'Sri' = the sign of the Srivatsa; 'Dharam' = to bear.]

धृतिदायकं (80) 'Dhriti-daayakam'—The Lord (Sri Ram) is a giver of Dhriti, also known as 'Dhairya'—i.e. the virtues of patience, courage, fortitude and forbearance. [That is, the Lord empowers the person who is devoted to the Lord and seeks the Lord's support to develop the grand virtues of patience and courage as well as fortitude and forbearance which helps him to overcome all the problems of life with calmness and poise. Such a man is never disturbed or agitated mentally and emotionally, and he is able to maintain his balance and composure. 'Dhrit' = courage, patience, fortitude and forbearance; 'Daayakam' = giver or bestower of something.]

बलवर्धनं (81) 'Bal-varadhanam'—The Lord (Sri Ram) enhances strength and valour (of his devotees and followers, as well as those who are righteous and holy). The Lord encourages those who are good and righteous by enhancing their strength to cope with adversities and evil. ['Bal' = force, strength; 'Vardhanam' = to increase.]

गतिदायकम् (82) 'Gati-daayakam'—The Lord (Sri Ram) gives the creature his ultimate destination in the form of rest for his soul and its emancipation and salvation. This is called 'Gati' or final destination. It also means that the Lord provides the world (i.e. its creature and the elements) the power of movement and the ability to keep the momentum. ['Gati' = the ultimate destination; speed and swiftness of movement; 'Daayakam' = giver.] ॥ १३ ॥

शान्तिदं जनतारकं शरधारिणं गजगामिनम् । त्वां भजे जगदीश्वरं नररूपिणं रघुनन्दनम् ॥ १४ ॥

Line no. 14— शान्तिदं (83) 'Shantidam'—The Lord (Sri Ram) is a giver of peace, tranquility and solace to the creature and his soul. ['Shanti' = peace; 'Dam' = giver.]

जनतारकं (84) 'Jan-tarakam'—The Lord (Sri Ram) is the one who takes the subjects of his kingdom (living beings, followers, devotees and dependants) across the formidable barrier represented by this world of transmigration, a world of delusions and endless cycle of birth and death along with its attendant miseries and torments. The Lord helps his subjects to overcome all spiritual hurdles and takes them to cross the vast ocean represented by the countless problems and horrors of this world. ['Jana' = subjects, dependants, followers; 'Tarakam' = one who takes across a formidable barrier.]

शरधारिणं (85) 'Shar-dhaarinam'—The Lord (Sri Ram) holds an arrow (in his hands). ['Shar' = arrow; 'Dhaarinam' = to hold.]

गजगामिनम् । (86) 'Gaj-gaminam'—The Lord (Sri Ram) had rushed forward or gone swiftly to save the elephant known as the Gaj. [This relates to an incident when Lord Vishnu had gone to save an elephant who was being pulled in the water by a crocodile. The elephant had tried all his might to save himself, but failed. When he was just about to completely drown in the water, he broke a lotus from the surrounding water and offered the flower as his last offering to the Lord. The Lord then rushed to save his devotee, the elephant. The Lord not only pulled him out of the water but cut off the head of the crocodile with his Chakra, the circular saw-like invincible weapon of Lord Vishnu. 'Gaja' = an elephant; 'Gaaminum' = to go.]

त्वां भजे जगदीश्वरं नररूपिणं रघुनन्दनम्-- 'Twam Bhaje Jadishwaram Nar-rupinam Raghunandanam'—I worship you, oh Lord (Sri Ram), who are the Lord of the world, is in the form of a human being, and are born in the race of kings belonging to the Raghu dynasty. [Refer line no. 12.] ॥ १४॥

शार्ङ्गिणं कमलाननं कमलादृशं पदपङ्कजम् । श्यामलं रविभासुरं शशिसौख्यदं करुणार्णवम् ॥ १५॥

Line no. 15— शार्ङ्गिणं (87) 'Shaangrinam'—The Lord (Sri Ram) holds a bow known as Shaarang. [This is the bow held by Lord Vishnu, the Supreme Lord of creation. It symbolizes the cosmic senses of the Viraat Purush. This bow of Lord Vishnu is also known as the *Shaankhya Dhanush* (bow). It was made from the bones of demon named Shaankhya-chuda after he was killed by Lord Shiva. According to Krishna Upanishad of the Atharva Veda tradition, verse no. 23, the Shaarang bow of Lord Vishnu stands for the Vaishnavi Maya which is the primary form of Maya closely associated with Vishnu. The Atharva Veda's Gopal Uttar Tapini Upanishad, verse no. 38 says that this Shaarang bow represents the Maya of the Supreme Being.]

कमलाननं (88) 'Kamalaa-nanam'—The Lord (Sri Ram) has eyes like the lotus flower. ['Kamal' = lotus; 'Nanam' = eyes.]

कमलादृशं (89) 'Kamalaa-drisham'—(a) The Lord (Sri Ram) looks as beautiful and untainted as the lotus flower. (b) The Lord (Ram as Vishnu) keeps his sight on Kamalaa, goddess Laxmi, his divine consort. ['Kamal' = lotus; 'Kamalaa' = goddess Laxmi, the divine consort of Vishnu; 'Drisham' = seen, observed.]

पदपङ्कजम् । (90) 'Pad-pankajam'—The Lord (Sri Ram) has lotus like feet. ['Pad' = feet; 'Pankaj' = lotus.]

श्यामलं (91) 'Shyaamalam'—The Lord (Sri Ram) has a dark complexion. ['Shyaamal' = dark complexion.]

रविभासुरं (92) 'Ravi-bhaasuram'—The Lord (Sri Ram) is as splendid, radiant and glorious as the brilliant Sun. ['Ravi' = sun; 'Bhaasuram' = splendour and brilliance.]

शशिसौख्यदं (93) 'Shashi-saukhya-dam'—The Lord (Sri Ram) is like the Moon that is soothing, provides comfort and peace, as well as happiness and joy to the beholder. ['Shashi' = moon; 'Saukhya' = happiness and joy; 'Dam' = gives.]

करुणार्णवम् (94) 'Karunaa-rnavam'—The Lord (Sri Ram) is an ocean of and a personified form of the glorious virtues of mercy, compassion and kindness. ['Karuna' = mercy; 'Varnam' = a personified form of.] ॥ १५॥

सत्पतिं नृपालकं नृपवन्दितं नृपतिप्रियम् । त्वां भजे जगदीश्वरं नररूपिणं रघुनन्दनम् ॥ १६॥

Line no. 16— सत्पतिं (95) 'Satpatim'—The Lord (Sri Ram) is truly the supreme Lord of creation. He is the patron Lord of the grand virtue of Truth. ['Sat' = true, truth; 'Patim' = lord.]

नृपपालकं (96) 'Nrip-paalam'—The Lord (Sri Ram) is the sustainer, care-taker, protector and well-wisher of all the kings of this world. ['Nrip' = king; 'Paalam' = protector and sustainer.]

नृपवन्दितं (97) 'Nrip-vanditam'—The Lord (Sri Ram) is adored, honoured and praised by all the kings. ['Nrip' = king; 'Vanditam' = praised and honoured by.]

नृपतिप्रियम् । (98) 'Nripati-priyam'—The Lord (Sri Ram) is dear to all the kings in this world. ['Nrip' = king; 'Priyam' = dear.]

त्वां भजे जगदीश्वरं नररूपिणं रघुनन्दनम्-- 'Twam Bhaje Jadishwaram Nar-rupinam Raghunandanam'—I worship you, oh Lord (Sri Ram), who are the Lord of the world, is in the form of a human being, and are born in the race of kings belonging to the Raghu dynasty. [Refer line no. 14.] ॥ १६ ॥

निर्गुणं सगुणात्मकं नृपमण्डनं मतिवर्धनम् । अच्युतं पुरुषोत्तमं परमेष्ठिनं स्मितभाषिणम् ॥ १७ ॥

Line no. 17— निर्गुणं (99) 'Nirgunam'—The Lord (Sri Ram) is without any attributes and definable qualities that may be limiting in their reach. [This is the cosmic and all-pervading form of the Supreme Being. This form is infinite, indescribable, beyond the reach of the mind and the intellect, all-encompassing and universal. It takes the form of each single individual element and thing in this world because the entire creation is a revelation of the same Supreme Being. Nothing in existence is not one or the other form of this Supreme Being. therefore, no single word or quality or epithet or attribute would do justice to who the Lord actually is or the form in which he exists because each one of them has its own limitation but the Lord is limitless and infinite in meaning and form. The Lord, for instance, is like the sky or the air or the water which have no definitive shape of their own but take the shape of the container in which they are present. The water in a cup, a piece of ice and the ocean is the same element known as 'water' though there is a vast difference between them. 'Nirguna' = without any Gunas or qualities.]

सगुणात्मकं (100) 'Sagunaatmakam'—The Lord (Sri Ram) is also with attributes and known qualities. [This relates to the known world that is visible. All things and creatures have a certain form, whether that form is miniscule like the atom or the single-celled creature such as the bacteria or amoeba, or like the colossus mountain, the tall trees or huge animals that roam the surface of earth, or even as the human being of myriad cultural backgrounds, ethnicity, language, beliefs etc. All of them are one or the other form of the same Supreme Lord. So the Lord has a given set of attributes and qualities in any given form in which the units of this creation exist. Therefore we say that the Lord has attributes. Even when the Supreme Lord himself took a birth as an incarnation, say for instance Lord Ram in our case, he had certain physical characteristics and personality traits. That is, he had some specific attributes and qualities that were specific to this form of Ram. Hence, the Supreme Being is 'Saguna' also. This is the great paradox of the Lord which makes him indefinable and beyond comprehension of the limited reach of the mind and the intellect—that he is 'Nirguna' as well as 'Saguna'. The word 'Saguna' means to have certain qualities and attributes.]

नृपमण्डनं (101) 'Nrip-mandanam'—The Lord (Sri Ram) is like the crown jewel and an ornament amongst the legend of kings and emperors who ever ruled this world. He is the

greatest of kings and emperors of this world. [That is, he has all the best qualities and character traits that one expects from a king or an emperor—such as for instance his nature of being merciful, compassionate, forgiving, graceful, law-abiding, caring, loving, benevolent, magnanimous, charitable, judicious and farsighted, as well as strong, valiant, powerful, dignified, honourable and taintless. ‘Nrip’ = king; ‘Mandanam’ = ornamental decoration.]

मतिवर्धनम् । (102) ‘Mati-varadhanam’—The Lord (Sri Ram) enhances one’s intellectual and mental refinement, prowess and abilities. The Lord blesses his devotees and followers with wisdom and intelligence. [Just like a student of a learned and expert teacher benefits from the teacher’s knowledge if the latter is kind to diligently teach his ward, the Lord also tries his best and ensures that those who rely upon him get the best of intellectual fruits that are available in this world. ‘Mati’ = mind; ‘Vardhan’ = to increase.]

अच्युतं (103) ‘Achutam’—The Lord (Sri Ram) is steady, and he never can fall from his exalted and high stature. He is ever graceful, dignified, immaculate and beyond reproach. [‘Achut’ = that which does not fall.]

पुरुषोत्तमं (104) ‘Purshottam’—The Lord (Sri Ram) is the best, an excellent and the most exalted Male (‘Purush’) ever born on earth. [The term ‘Purush’ has a double meaning here—it means that in his incarnation as a human known as Lord Ram, the Supreme Being is the best amongst all the males ever born on earth, and as the cosmic Supreme Being he is the best amongst all the Gods of the heavens. ‘Purush’ = male; ‘Uttam’ = the best, excellent.]

परमेष्ठिनं (105) ‘Parmeshthinam’—The Lord (Sri Ram) is the almighty, omnipotent, omnipresent and omniscient Supreme Being known as Parmesthi. [‘Parmesthi’ = the Supreme Being who is almighty, omnipotent, omnipresent and omniscient.]

स्मितभाषिणम् (106) ‘Smit-bhaashinam’—The Lord (Sri Ram) has a smiling face that is sweet and endearing. The Lord talks or speaks sweetly and in a pleasant voice that is friendly, welcoming and amiable. Whenever the Lord talks he always has a sweet smile on his lips. [‘Smit’ = smile that is sweet and pleasant; ‘Bhaashinam’ = to talk or speak.]

१७॥

ईश्वरं हनुमन्नुतं कमलाधिपं जनसाक्षिणम् । त्वां भजे जगदीश्वरं नररूपिणं रघुनन्दनम् ॥ १८ ॥

Line no. 18— ईश्वरं (107) ‘Ishwaram’—The Lord (Sri Ram) is indeed the Supreme Being and the Lord of the entire creation (‘Ishwar’).

हनुमन्नुतं (108) ‘Hanumannutam’—(a) The Lord (Sri Ram) makes Hanuman happy and elated. The Lord enhances the confidence and glory of Hanuman. (b) The Lord is praised, honoured and adored by Hanuman who bows reverentially before him. [Hanuman was the closest monkey devotee of the Lord. He was instrumental in finding Sita for Lord Ram, and in winning the war at Lanka. ‘Hanuman’ = the monkey friend and devotee of Lord Ram; ‘Unnat’ = to rise or increase; ‘Nuttam’ = to bow and adore someone.]

कमलाधिपं (109) ‘Kamlaa-dhipam’—The Lord (Sri Ram) is the Lord (husband) of Kamlaa, the goddess Laxmi who is Lord Vishnu’s divine consort and the patron goddess of prosperity and wealth. [‘Kamlaa’ = Laxmi, so-called because she holds a lotus in her hands; ‘Dhipam’ = lord, king, husband.]

जनसाक्षिणम् । (110) ‘Jan-saakshinam’—The Lord (Sri Ram) is a neutral and universal witness for all the living beings of this creation, and for what they do and think. [Being the cosmic Soul of this creation, the Lord resides in the heart of all living beings, and therefore nothing is hidden from him or unknown to him. The Lord is omniscient and all-knowing, therefore he witnesses whatever a creature does externally and overtly, as well as what he thinks and feels inside his mind and heart internally. ‘Jan’ = subjects of the kingdom, the ordinary creature; ‘Saakshi’ = witness.]

त्वां भजे जगदीश्वरं नररूपिणं रघुनन्दनम्--

‘Twam Bhaje Jadishwaram Nar-rupinam Raghunandanam’—I worship you, oh Lord (Sri Ram), who are the Lord of the world, is in the form of a human being, and are born in the race of kings belonging to the Raghu dynasty. [Refer line no. 16.] ॥ १८ ॥

[Note—The above stanzas, from no. 1 till no. 18, of this great devotional hymn dedicated to Lord Ram outline the Lord’s one hundred and ten names. Now, Lord Shiva tells Parvati the time when to say this hymn, and the spiritual and other rewards that augment to the devotee who uses this hymn to worship the Lord.]

ईश्वरोदितमेतदुत्तममादराच्छतनामकम् । यः पठेद् भुवि मानवस्तव भक्तिमांस्तपनोदये ॥ १९ ॥

Line no. 19— Lord Shiva said—‘Anyone on the surface of this earth who offers his worship to Lord Ram, the Supreme Being, by faithfully and devotionally reciting this hymn consisting of more than a hundred glorious and divine Names of the Lord every morning at the time of sunrise, will develop great faith, devotion and love for the Lord (Sri Ram).

त्वत्पदं निजबन्धुदारसुतैर्युतश्चिरमेत्य नः । सोऽस्तु ते पदसेवने बहुतत्परो मम वाक्यतः ॥ २० ॥

(आनन्दरामायण, पूर्णकाण्ड ६।३२-५१)

Line no. 20— Such a person would come to my (Lord Shiva’s) divine abode along with his kith and kin, his wife and sons etc., and would steadily serve the holy feet of the Lord (Sri Ram as the Supreme Being) for an infinitely long time to come.’

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Section 3:

Importance of the figure of 108

The number '108' is regarded as very auspicious because the total of its first digit '1' and the last digit '8' comes to '9', which is the last numeral and the highest basic figure or value. The numeral '9' is called the cardinal number as it is the highest amongst the primary list of numbers (from 1 to 9), and there is no number after it. It symbolically stands for the Supreme Being because there is nothing beyond the Supreme Being.

The miracle of 108 is that if we add the three numbers $1 + 0 + 8$ we get the number '9'. Apparently the '0' appears to have no value, but then 108 is not 'nine' but 'one *hundred* nine'. If we remove the '0', the remaining two digits, '1' and '8' together make the number '18' only, while merely placing the '0' in their middle enhances their value manifold. In other words, in spite of seeming to have no value of its own, the '0' makes the other two numbers enhanced in value a hundred times. Likewise, though Brahm is passive, it is Brahm that gives this creation its meaning, worth, and life.

There is another way of looking at the figure 108. The digit '0' represents the formless Brahm, the Supreme Being, who is central to this creation but is so formless and without any attributes of his own that it is like 'zero'. Brahm lends the creation all the worth it has just like the numeral '0' that has no value of its own but when added to any given number or numeral it enhances its value by ten times, by hundred times, by thousand times, and by millions and millions of times.

Brahm is the core or the center of this creation like the digit '0' in 108. Just as we lose the figure of 108 by removing the '0' from it, we lose this creation by removing Brahm from it.

The creation is envisioned as an 'egg' or a rounded ball. The numeral '0' is also shaped like an egg. The figure '1' placed before it indicates the beginning or the primary stage of creation, and the figure of '8' placed at the end indicates the maximum limit to which this creation can grow. As we have seen above, the numeral '8' is just one short of the cardinal number of '9'. Hence here it means that even the best and the highest form of life in this creation is not complete without Brahm represented by the '0'.

The entire creation—from the basic and rudimentary form symbolized by the number '1' to the highest form represented by the number '8'—has Brahm at the center like the hub of a wheel. The complete entity that is known as this creation has a beginning represented by the numeral '1', the most developed form represented by the numeral '8', with the 'Atma' at the center represented by the number '0'.

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About the Author

Ajai Kumar Chhawchharia left home when he was approximately 29 years of age due to an inner call of his heart that told him to devote his life in the service of his beloved Lord God, Sri Ram. Worldly attractions did not enchant him at all. So, he didn't marry, and

after his father's death he came and settled permanently in Ayodhya, the holy town in India associated with Lord Ram.

Presently he works as an honorary manager of a world famous Kanak Bhavan Temple at Ayodhya, and spends his time writing in English so that the world can access the wonderful nectar of metaphysical, spiritual and devotional philosophy that is contained in Indian scriptures for which they are so renowned.

His English Books published separately by a reputed publisher of India, the details of whom can be had by contacting the author on his email given below, include: (i) The series on '108 Upanishads' in five volumes having eighteen parts, (ii) Veda Vyas' 'Adhyatma Ramayan' in two parts, (iii) 'Devi Puran Ramayan', (iv) Valmiki's 'Adbhut Ramayan', and (v) 'Biography of Lord Ram' based on Tulsidas' books.

Genre of Writing: Spiritualism, Philosophy, Metaphysics, Religious, Devotional and Theological.

The author's Books are available for order online both in 'e-book' format and 'paper-back book' format at following websites—

- (a) www.amazon.com (in their 'kindle' + 'paper-back book' versions),
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List of Books that are currently available as mentioned above :-

(A) (1) The Chariot of God: Dharma Rath; (2) OM and Naad; (3) YOGA—Its Practice and Philosophy according to the Upanishads; (4) Ram Geeta; (5) The Revelation of Creation—as envisioned in the Upanishads; (6) The Pentagon of Creation: As Expounded in the Upanishads; (7) The Triumvirate of Creation; (8) Maya: The Whirlpool of Delusions in Creation; (9) Surdas-Ram Charitawali; (10-a) The legend of Lord Shiva: Book 1 'Lord Shiva's marriage with Parvati'; (10-b) Book 2 'Lord Shiva's Sacred Hymns'; (10-c) Book 3 'Shiva's different names & their significance, Shiva Puran, Upanishads'; (11) the Mahavakyas of the Upanishads; (13) Lord Ram's marriage with Sita (based on Tulsidas' books "Ram Charit Manas", "Janki Mangal", "Ram Lala Nahachu" & "Geetawali", and sage Veda Vyas' book "Adhyatma Ramayan"; (14) "Anthology of Sacred Hymns, Stotras & Mantras of Lord Ram"; (15) "Vairagya Shatkam" of king-sage Bhartrihari; (16) An Anthology of the Sanyas Upanishads-Parts 1 and 2; (17) "Kaag-Bhusund Ramayan" or the "Aadi Ramayan" based on Tulsidas' Ram Charit Manas; (18) The Legendary Glory of Hanuman; (19) "Narad Bhakti Sutra"—Aphorisms for Devotion for God and the Principles of Love for the Lord; (20) "Shandilya Bhakti Sutra"—Aphorisms for Devotion for God and the Principles of Love for the Lord according to the illustrious sage Shandilya; (21) "Bhakti Sutra Mala"—A Garland of Spiritual Wisdom in the form of an Anthology of Aphorisms pertaining to Bhakti or devotion, love and affection for Lord God; (22) Glory of Lord Ram's Holy Name, Sacred

Mantras, Stotras & Hymns; (23) Saints and Non-Saints: Their Distinguishing Characters and Qualities; (24) A True Guru (Qualities, Importance and Need of a True Teacher, Preceptor, Guide and Advisor); (25) “Sundar Kand” of Ram Charit Manas; (26) The Story of Ravana and the Epic War of Lanka—Told in Slow Motion (based on, and will have the full relevant Text of, Ram Charit Manas, Adhyatma Ramayan, Anand Ramayan, Geetawali Ramayan, and Kavitawali Ramayan).

(B) Goswami Tulsidas Series: (1) Book 1- ‘Dohawali’; (2) Book 2- ‘Parvati Mangal’; (3) Book 3- ‘Kavitawali’; (4) Book 4- ‘Janki Mangal’; (5) Book 5- ‘Ram Lala Nahachu’; (6) Book 6- ‘Geetawali Ramayan’; (7) Book 7- ‘Vairagya Sandipani’; (8) Book 8- ‘Vinai Patrika’; (9) ‘Barvai Ramayan’.

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